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ISLAND STORIES

Stories of the Islands of the South Sea

Edited by Mrs. J. H. Stoddard

Published by the Allen County Public Library
Cincinnati, Ohio

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ISLAND STORIES

STRAITS OF MACKINAC

By MARION MORSE DAVIS (Mrs. ELVERT M.)

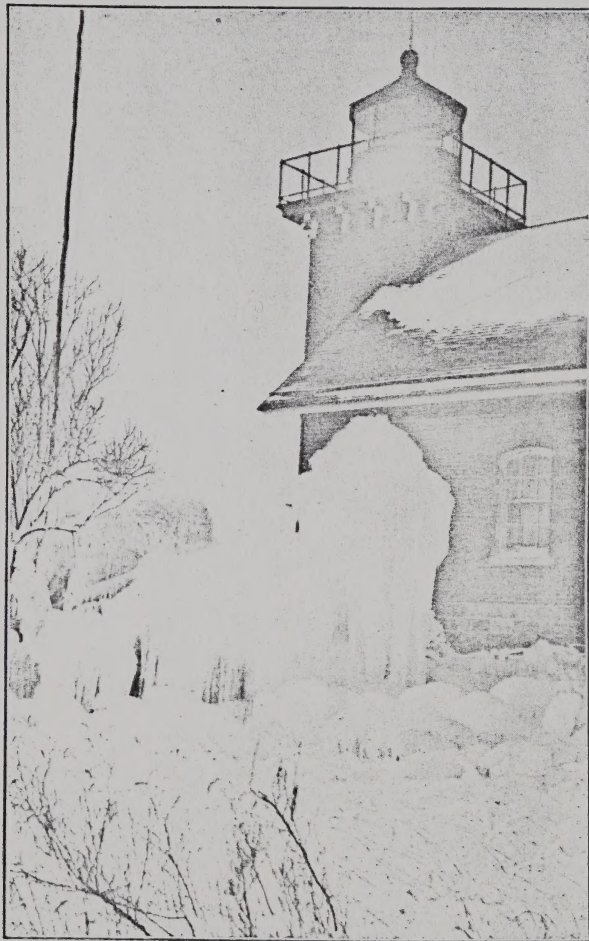
Reprinted from the MICHIGAN HISTORY MAGAZINE, with an
Introductory Paper, Corrections, and Additional Notes.

1947



Printed by the Franklin DeKleine Company, State Printers, Lansing, Michigan,
for Marion Morse Davis.

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The old lighthouse at Harbor Point, St. Helena Island, where Mrs. Williams wrote *A Child of the Sea*. The photo was taken by Daniel Williams, her husband.

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IF THERE is any air in which action
is the very charm and flavor of life,
and not its curse, it is in the air of
Mackinac.

—BAYARD TAYLOR,

At Home and Abroad, 1855-1860

Gift 48
Mrs. Elvert Davis
Tallahassee, Fla.

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EDITOR'S FOREWORD

"The romance that clings to islands, whether set in lake or sea" is the theme of these stories,—here certain isles in northern Lake Michigan and the Straits of Mackinac: Mackinac Island, Round Island, Bois Blanc, the Beavers, the Manitous, the Fox Islands, and St. Helena.

In view of the author's colorful introduction, there seems little need of an editor's preface. As there stated, the four articles in the book are reprinted from summer issues of the *Michigan History Magazine* (1926, 1927 and 1928), with corrections and additional notes, made mainly by the author. As is well known, this Magazine is a state publication, issued by the Michigan Historical Commission. It was this editor's pleasure to serve the Commission as secretary-editor for some thirty years, founding the Magazine in 1917, and editing it continuously until the summer of 1946. So these articles belong to the Magazine's early years. Typical of the writings of their author, they are good history and good reading.

The inclusion of "Alexander Henry and Wawatam" as an island story, while it was centrally an episode of Old Fort Mackinaw on the mainland, is justified by the important role played by Henry's hiding place on Mackinac Island. In any case, the article is worthy of attention as a Damon and Pythias story of Indian and white man, sufficiently impressive to have attracted the mind of Henry David Thoreau in his essay on Friendship. Whether it is fiction or truth matters little, but the author of the article deserves credit for her careful marshalling of fairly convincing evidence of its essential truth.

The stories of the islands speak for themselves. Always, perhaps, Mackinac Island will remain the "queen" of Michigan's "islands of the Straits". It has been celebrated by many writers old and new. The famous travel sketches by Harriet Martineau, Ann Jameson, Margaret Fuller, William Cullen Bryant, Bayard Taylor, among others, are familiar to most lovers of Mackinac history, legend and tradition. Mrs. Davis has added notably to this collection.

Bois Blanc and Round Island are interesting as Mackinac neighbors. Bois Blanc is the We-go-bee-min-iss of the Indians, and the

I. aux Bois Blanc on Charlevoix's map of 1744. It served well with its "white wood" the British and American garrisons on Mackinac Island. Round Island was the Indian "little island" (Min-nis-ais-ing),— called by some of the Indians "middle island" (Nis-sa-win-a-gong), referring to its position between Bois Blanc and Mackinac Island. It was *Isle Ronde* to the French. In early days it was a favorite of the Indians and is now of archaeological interest for its Indian burial grounds. To the lore of both of these islands Mrs. Davis has added pleasantly "a few echoes of the old time stories". With Mackinac they are the theme of "Three Islands".

The Beavers, a group of nine islands, were called the *I. aux Castor* by the French explorers and traders. They were the site of an Ottawa Indian mission founded by Father Baraga in the early 1830's, and about that time the national government by treaty reserved the use of these islands to the Indians. The first white occupancy was a fishing station on Paradise Bay in the 1840's. In that decade came the Strangite Mormons, under the politically-minded James Jesse Strang, who established a "kingdom" there, and later became a member of the Michigan state legislature. One of the Beavers, High Island, became the possession of the House of David, noted religious organization which had headquarters at Benton Harbor. In recent years the Beavers have rapidly gained popularity as a summer resort.

The Manitous, so called by both the Indians and the French, are rich in legend and tradition. They were first settled by white men in the 1840's. South Manitou was colonized by Germans, whose descendants still live there. Fishing, lumbering, and farming in turn have supported the settlers. The islands are famous for their exceptional quality of Rosen rye and for their extensive cherry orchards. They are now a popular summer resort.

The two Fox Islands, north and south, were called by the Indians "Wau-goosh-e-min-iss",—apparently indicating the early presence of the fox as a desired fur-bearing animal there. The Beaver Island Mormons had settlements on both islands. A chief early industry was supplying cord-wood to passing steamers. Cedar furnished material for staves and boxes. North Fox Island, almost a solid bank of gravel, became the site of the Fox Island Gravel Company. The Fox islands, about midway between the Beavers and the Mani-

tous, are but "mere dots on the map", as it were, but are included in "A Romantic Chain of Islands".

"Set like an emerald in the blue" lies the little isle of St. Helena, at the western gateway to the Straits of Mackinac. This islet, less than a square mile in area, is a favorite with the author, who found that "close inquiry and long search are necessary to piece out the vague and varied reports of the activities of which it was once the center." On the Charlevoix map (1744), it appears as *I. Ste. Hélène*, but why the name no one seems to know for sure; Mrs. Davis makes a reasonable guess. Indian legend has added to the interest of the island. It figured in the fierce struggles of the Chipewas and the Ottawas against the Iroquois and other enemies. It played its part in the fur trade and later in the fisheries. At one time it rivalled Mackinac as a trading center. It was from St. Helena that the expedition to exterminate the Beaver Island Mormons started after the death of "King Strang". But today its once flourishing harbor "where used to assemble from 50 to 100 sail a day" is deserted. Mrs. Davis has told the history of the island with affection and skill.

The sweeping changes of modern times have made a definite break with the period of past glory celebrated in these stories of our northern islands. That period lay in the days before the age of steam and electricity, when folks travelled by water whenever they could. The Straits of Mackinac were at the center of the inland waterways of North America, and hence were the center of its transportation and commerce until a new age made land transportation more rapid and profitable. With the great transcontinental railroads, the center of commercial gravity shifted to Chicago, and now the great airlines have entered the picture. But the historic romance of the north country remains. At the heart of it are the islands of the Straits. The stories recorded in this book, it is believed, will have a permanent place in the literature of Michigan and the Great Lakes region.

GEORGE N. FULLER

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

WHOEVER visits the islands of the Straits comes away so enchanted with their charms, that no apology is needed when he resolves to share his experiences with others and introduce to them some of the legends of the region.

The first time that we visited the Beavers was with the Circuit Judge of Charlevoix County, when the party was guided by "Bowery Bill" Gallegher, and the second time, a longer stay, we were assisted in some of our explorations by the then editor of the Charlevoix newspaper, a man thoroughly conversant with the stories of the locality.

This second and longer visit was the source of personal interviews on more intimate acquaintance with the islanders. Several sojourns at Mackinac Island and an almost residential stay at Mackinaw City, in our cottage at Wawatam Beach, added to the list of residents of the Michilimackinac country who would freely discuss "the Mormon era".

An article written for the Grand Rapids *Herald*, and published August 21, 1919, was the beginning of a series of papers afterward printed in the *Michigan History Magazine* from one July issue to another. Below are some extracts from the newspaper articles that seem appropriate to the present re-printing of the *Michigan History Magazine* papers.

"Setting sail on the little steamer *Bruce* from Charlevoix to St. James, the safe and picturesque harbor of Big Beaver, the largest of the group of islands in Lake Michigan known as 'The Beavers,' we were soon crossing what is often the roughest passage along the Lake.

"Big Beaver might well be called a Michigan Emerald Isle, nearly all of the inhabitants being descendants of emigrants from that island far across the sea. . . . Some of them came direct from Ireland to the Straits, but more were detained awhile in the East before working their way from New York or Connecticut or Massachusetts to Mackinac Island and the mainland, and thence to Big Beaver after the Mormons were driven out."

We were prepared for the beauty of the island women, for "at Charlevoix we overheard a young man telling a young woman that he had just been to the boat to meet a friend, a girl. 'Is she good-looking?' rallied the girl to whom he was speaking. 'She is from Beaver Island,' he answered. 'Oh, then she is good-looking, all right,' she rejoined, 'for there was never a homely girl came off the island!'

"And to this we can add our testimony, for though there is one girl there, twenty-four years old, who has never been off the island, even she is pretty.

"The sky is blue and the bay is smiling, and they are a smiling people. I have heard my father tell how in Ireland everyone greets the stranger with a smile and a pleasant word. It is so on Beaver Island. Children and grown-ups are all pleasant, smiling and courteous, speaking to everyone, and their kindness and generosity are proverbial. You can't rent rowboats on the island, but you are told to help yourself to any boat that is not in use. 'Take it any time for as long as you want.'"

Though the fishing that year was poor, and the farms lacked rain, you heard few complaints. Irish optimism was in full sway at St. James.

"I have always been thankful that I visited Mackinac Island for the first time just after reading Constance Fenimore Woolson's *Anne*, and I am equally grateful that I first set foot on the Beaver Islands, thrilled by the romance of the tales of that region contained in Mary Hartwell Catherwood's *Mackinac and Lake Stories*.

"Besides Catherwood's stories, there is a novel by James Oliver Curwood that deals with the Mormon history of the Beavers and with the overthrow of King Strang. . . . Both hang the thread of their romance on the desire of the 'king' for yet another wife, the seventh. But they are very different in their methods. For delicate romance and realistic character study, read Catherwood; for blood and thunder drama, read Curwood.

"Elizabeth Whitney Williams, who was once keeper at the St. James (Beaver Point) lighthouse, wrote an idyl of the island, a tale entitled *A Child of the Sea*. As she was living on the island, eleven years of age, when the Mormons left, this should have some authority, and it had a considerable sale in the north country. It is now

among the 'rare book' items. Danny Martin, who was 'ruz' to the making of fish nets, and now spends his time mending them, told us a most interesting story of how his father and his uncle, fishermen from Mackinac Island, landing on Beaver in a fog, were robbed by the Mormons and narrowly escaped death at their hands. Danny's narratives lose no whit of their interest by the interlarding of such exclamations as, 'Lord-a-golly, woman dear, there's always less or more of such', and other characteristic phrases, and no one should miss a visit to his net house. He is a fine, intelligent and industrious islander, and it is a treat to watch his skillful handling of the gracefully shaped netting shuttle.

"No account of St. James would be complete without mention of 'Bowery Bill' Gallagher, who came as a boy from the famous East Side of New York City to visit an uncle on the Island and stayed to become its leading citizen and political oracle. He has held with credit the position of deputy oil inspector of the State and is now supervisor of the district and virtual lord of the isles.

"Then there is Mr. Dunlevy, patriarch of his clan, a well-educated and travelled gentleman, born in Ireland, where his father was in the coast guard, now interested in most of the financial endeavors of the island. He told us that he lost many thousands of dollars when the lake steamers took to burning coal instead of the wood for which they used to stop at the island docks.

"One of my most interesting memories is the conversation in which I took a spectator's part, between him and some French fishermen from Cheboygan who had stopped at the dock for gasoline, the modern fisher's sailing medium.

"'And so you are a Fountain from Mackinac Island? Well, I knew all that family well. And your husband is one of old Gabe Lafret's boys (he was a boy of perhaps sixty); well, where are Gabe and his wife now?' and so on with the round of the gossip of all the islands and harbors of the straits. Truly there are other worlds than ours, and other circles than the narrow ones in which you and I move.

"Most of the better lake captains and mates have been raised at St. James, and there are many who, as the current phrase has it, 'have been on salt water.' And one does not wonder when he sees boys of ten and twelve handling motor boats, and has witnessed a

few trials of the speed-boat built this year (1919) by one of the young McCann's, whose father is postmaster. Like Danny to the netting, they were all 'ruz' to the lake. . . .

.....
"It is a quiet place, and appeals to quiet tastes. Excursions to Garden Island, where there is an interesting cemetery, with latticed huts built over the graves; further away to High Island, where is an old Indian mission with a quaint church . . . ; and drives to the inland lakes and Mt. Pisgah vary the days.

"Captain Mannis Bonner and his wife, now residents of Grand Rapids, used to keep the hotel. Captain Bonner was an old lake captain and a royal host, and he and his sailboat are well remembered by the old-time visitors. He is succeeded by a woman boniface who grew up on the island and had long been an attache of the hotel. She is well acquainted with all the older guests, so that it is like a visit home to stay at Hotel Beaver.

"It is a closely bound community life, a survival of Arcadia in a commercial age. Whoever once enters wholeheartedly into the spirit of the place, does not easily forget it, and across the years the echo sings,

Take me back to Beaver Island, for I want to watch once more
The sunset at "the Portage" as we looked from off the shore

Across from Garden Island to High Island blue and dim
Where it shows beside Trout Island on the far horizon's rim,

And dream of tales of pirates, and adventures bold and free,
The romance that clings to islands, whether set in lake or sea.

In after years came the stays at Mackinaw, and near the old fort, and where

From the beach where Chief Wawatam landed stealthily at night
Hoping his adopted brother had survived the bloody fight
Come the shouts of happy children, playing in the surf and sand,
Where in other times the Indians drew their war canoes to land.

An article on this chief and his adopted brother, Alexander Henry, written during these years, was published August 15, 1920 in the *Grand Rapids Herald*.

In 1922 the annual meeting of the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society at Mackinaw was the occasion of an account printed in the *Grand Rapids Herald* of July 23, and that led to a more

intensive study of the Alexander Henry incident. A paper on this incident was published in the *Michigan History Magazine* of July, 1925. This is reprinted as the first item in this book.

The last article on the North country that was printed in the *Grand Rapids Herald* concerned the life of Elizabeth Whitney Williams, the author of *A Child of the Sea*. Interviews with her and her (second) husband in their home at Charlevoix were of great value in understanding the history of the region. Judge Joseph Steere had boarded with the Williams' when Mrs. Williams was keeper of the Beaver Point lighthouse. An old friend and associate of my father on the Michigan Supreme bench, he gave me many valuable suggestions; his testimony as to the veracity of Mrs. Williams' story was of prime importance, his knowledge of all the lore of the Straits of inestimable worth in seeking and weighing the stories of the region.

—M. M. D.

ALEXANDER HENRY AND WAWATAM

MANY of the questions arising from the disputed legends of the Michillimackinac country have received attention from able and interesting writers. Only lately has the veracity of Alexander Henry, the adventurous Englishman, whose account of the massacre at Old Fort Mackinaw has formed for years the main part of the historical knowledge of that incident of Pontiac's conspiracy, been attacked in print. Although all of his commentators recognized certain errors in his narrative inseparable from the circumstances under which it was written, forty-six years after the events occurred, and from notes "from time to time committed to paper" (Henry), it is on the whole so graphic and so reliable, that it has become an almost unquestioned authority.

For some time past, the Lakeside Publishing Company of Chicago has each Christmas reprinted as a gift to its customers and employes, some old work of value to the history of the Northwest, but out of print and hence not available to the public. In 1921 they reprinted *The Travels and Adventures of Alexander Henry*, with notes and historical introduction by Milo M. Quaife. This is the third edition of Henry's book, both the original edition, and the one edited by Professor James Bain of the Toronto Public Library in 1901 being out of print. This Lakeside edition is a handsome and compact little volume, with a fine portrait of Henry, copied from the original edition. The introduction takes note of the first book in which the authenticity of Henry's account of the massacre at Mackinaw City is directly attacked,—*"The Myth Wawatam"* by H. Bedford-Jones, hand printed at Santa Barbara, Cal., in 1917, in a very limited edition. It collates some of the manifest errors in Henry's narrative, and attempts by them to disprove the veracity of the whole. It has the merit of an extremely attractive and unique form and of an appended description of old Fort Mackinaw which gives an excellent picture of its condition before the present "improvements" turned it into a tourist camp.

As Quaife remarks, the spirit of its criticisms is sufficiently indicated in the following lines of verse which preface the booklet,—

"Garrulous old trader, sitting with a jorum
Close beside your elbow and tobacco blowing free
Easy 'tis to picture you, spinning to a quorum
Of pop-eyed New York burghers your tales of deviltry."

Mr. Quaife has ably handled some of the historic points which Mr. Bedford-Jones has attempted to make against Henry's narrative, although he has not had space to give to each of them, but there is another class of criticism also to be taken into account.

The three great ice-crushing ferry boats that have successfully carried the trains across from upper to lower peninsula have long been the pride of the Straits. The first was named the St. Ignace, and the heart of that town swelled with joy. Then followed the Ste. Marie, and it was during the palmy days of this ferry boat that Russia sent her leading admiral to study its construction and operation, and copied it for use on the Neva at St. Petersburg. Then followed the Chief Wawatam, bigger and better than its predecessors, and named for Henry's preserver, his adopted Indian brother.

Captain Robertson, the genial commander of the Chief Wawatam, tells of an old Indian, self-styled a chief, and well-known to all tourists and visitors to Mackinaw City on holidays, for his importunate begging, who used to look the ferry over scornfully, and mutter, "Ugh, Wawatam no chief." But the author of the booklet referred to, goes farther, for he would bar Wawatam from his very existence as an Indian, leaving out his claim to chieftainship.

These assertions of H. Bedford-Jones are supported by the notes of Henry McConnell of Walloon Lake, who has written articles for the Michigan History Magazine, and is generally regarded as a close student of Northern Michigan history. H. Bedford-Jones himself is a writer of stories for the all-story class of magazines, and is very popular with his readers. He spends his summers in the north, and is a member, as is McConnell, of the Michigan and Wisconsin Historical Societies. Many of his tales are founded on historical events in the region of the Straits—notably one on the Beaver Island Mormon episode, and one on incidents at Mackinac Island during the War of 1812. Milo M. Quaife, who takes up the cudgels for Henry, is a well known writer on historical subjects, formerly Superintendent of the Wisconsin State Historical Society.

This promises to be an interesting controversy, but how much more thrilling might it become if the writers of the past could take part in it. For the narrative of Henry has been read and admired and studied as a classic by all the historians of the north, as well as by all the travelers in that region, down to the present day tourist who gets it in condensed form through his Bailey and Williams as he visits Mackinac Island, and gazes into Skull Cave.

Francis Parkman, in the *Conspiracy of Pontiac*, says Henry's "authenticity has never been questioned", and he visited that country when Schoolcraft was able to help him in his researches.

Mrs. Jameson, the author of *Shakespeare's Heroines, Legendary and Sacred Art*, and various other critical works, used his book as guide during her tour of the Lakes in 1837. She lived in Canada for some time. She says, "Wild as are the tales of his hairbreadth escapes, I never heard the slightest impeachment of his veracity. He was living in Montreal so late as 1810 or 1811, when a friend of mine saw him. His book has been long out of print." She was a skilled follower-up of legends and facts. She says of his style "Plain, unaffected, telling what he has to tell in few and simple words, and without comment—the internal evidence of truth—the natural sensibility and power of fancy, betrayed rather than displayed—render not only the narrative, but the man himself, his personal character, unspeakably interesting." His book was published in 1807, only thirty years before Mrs. Jameson had to borrow a copy, not being able otherwise to obtain one.

Margaret Fuller (Ossoli) whose *Summer on the Lakes* (1843) shows she was rather slow to accept traditions, says:

"If we are entitled to judge by its best fruits of the goodness of the tree, Adair's Red Shoes, and Henry's Wawatam, should make us respect the first possessors of our country, and doubt whether we are in all ways worthy to fill their place."

Henry combines "sentiment and thoughtfulness" with "boldness, personal resource, fortitude."

Lanman, the distinguished early historian and traveler, in his *Summer in the Wilderness* (1846) says of a certain assertion, "The truth of this incident is corroborated by an incident recorded by Henry," as though that were the final word; and Lanman was no superficial student.

In the *Canadian Magazine* for April and May, 1824, published in the month that he died, is a biography of Alexander Henry that is most complimentary. He was prominent in Montreal in commercial and government circles and twice visited the Old World. "Among the Indian nations he went by the epithet of the 'handsome Englishman', and on his appearance at the Court of France he was known by the same distinctive appellation." The biographer also speaks of "Mr. Henry's high character for correctness, and his punctuality in business", "his firmly established character for integrity". He left a daughter, sons and grandsons, some of whom distinguished themselves in various ways.

Henry's narrative has been accepted by present day historians unreservedly. The late Samuel F. Cook of Lansing, whose monograph on Drummond Island is quoted as authority, and who is an iconoclast in matters of tradition, in his disputatious little pamphlet, "Mackinaw in History" speaks of "Henry, whose account is regarded as thoroughly reliable."

When questions of great moment are involved, we hale the disputants into Court, and are supposed to abide by the decision of the tribunal, especially when it has reached the Court of last resort.

Justice Joseph H. Steere of the Michigan Supreme Court, a sincere and candid student of Michigan history, in an article published some years ago in the *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, refers in a note to the fact that Henry's narrative has been accepted as authority by the Supreme Court of the United States. In answer to an inquiry, he says:

"That case is entitled 'United States vs. Repentigny' and is found in 72 United States Supreme Court Reports, or, as otherwise named, 5th Wallace, beginning at page 211. It is a rather interesting case historically as it deals with the old French Seigniorship granted by the King of France to two French officers, before the French and Indian war, of a tract of land six leagues square at the falls of Sault Ste. Marie, covering territory on which now stands the city of Sault Ste. Marie."

William K. Clute made an exhaustive study of the case when he was United States District Attorney for Western Michigan. He says that it was a hard fought case, naturally involving much publicity. It was decided in 1867. At that time there must have been

living people who had known Henry. Every effort would probably have been made to invalidate any portions of his work in order that it should not be accepted as authority. But it is so accepted and quoted by the court of last resort in these United States.

Justice Steere himself has followed Henry's routes over the Lake Superior country and to the Hudson Bay posts, and finds his descriptions accurate. He has visited the "Island of the Golden Sands", of Carver and Henry, (modern Caribou Island), and verified Henry's observations. He knew well an educated Indian of the Soo, uncle of the celebrated J. Logan Chipman, who read Henry with appreciation and approval; and who, by the way, pronounced Wawatam with the accent on the last syllable rather than the next to the last, as is customary today at Mackinaw.

H. Bedford-Jones says that we hear in no other narrative than Henry's the names of Chief Minewehna, or Minavavana, as it is spelled on the monument erected two years ago at the Mackinaw City Park to mark the scene of the massacre; or of Chief Wawatam, the friend of Henry, after whom the ferry boat and the Beach are named.

Mrs. Grace Franks Kane, of Detroit, is a descendant of those Franks who bought the old Mission House at Mackinac Island from the American Board of Missions, and whose descendants have ever since operated it as a hotel, entertaining under its quaint and hospitable roof such writers as Mary Hartwell Catherwood, who made Henry the hero of her romance, *The White Islander*, and Edward Everett Hale, who here wrote *The Man Without a Country*.¹ Mrs. Kane has written a delightful series of tales gathered from the Indians in her childhood and girlhood, under the title, *Myths and Legends of the Mackinacs*. In a letter dated from the island, where she was spending the summer, she wrote, "I gave the legends as I remember them, simply to preserve them. The legends are not original with me, but the way of telling them is." Her letter was in response to an inquiry as to whether she had invented the names, or borrowed them, or whether they were as taken from the Indian originals.

One of the legends thus begins, "In the days of this story there

¹See Vol. XXI, *Mich. Hist. Mag.*, pp. 291-2-3 for evidence about the alleged visit of Hale to the Mission House.

lived, at Manitoulin, a wise and influential chief by the name of Minewehna," and another tells of "The Young Indian, Wawatam, mail-carrier between the Island of Mackinac and the villages of the mainland."

Obviously this Wawatam could not have been Henry's friend, because there was no settlement on the island which would have required a mail-carrier at the time of the massacre, and Wawatam was then "forty-five years of age, of an excellent character among his nation, and a chief." (Henry) Should it prove that there was later a young Indian mail-carrier named Wawatam, this would account for the Indian telling Captain Robertson that Wawatam was not a chief, as he probably supposed the ferry to be named for the young mail-carrier, who might have lived within his own recollection.²

Interesting as the point is, we are reminded by Thoreau that it is not necessary to prove that Henry's Wawatam really existed to make the name worthy of the attention that has been given it. In his wonderful essay on "Friendship" perhaps the best known of his delightful writings, Thoreau says "The friendship which Wawatam testified for Henry the furtrader, as described in the latter's 'Adventures', * * * * is remembered with satisfaction and security." Thoreau does not dwell upon the incident of the massacre, but rather on the long winter "of undisturbed and happy intercourse in the family of the chieftain in the wilderness." He seems to agree with Quaife, that after his farewell prayer, Wawatam "*appropriately* disappears alike from Henry's tale and from recorded history," rather than to cavil as does H. Bedford-Jones that "after returning to Mackinaw, Henry not only fails to reward his rescuer, but never so much as mentions him." Perhaps, like Kipling, Alexander Henry is artist enough to recognize the point at which "that is another story."

In the last analysis, it would seem uncontrovertible that Henry's Wawatam was a real Indian, and a chief. One who believes otherwise must admit that the creation of such a character out of whole cloth would entitle Henry to a high place in the ranks of fiction writers, and, by proving his faults as a historian, would only add to his fame as a novelist.

²See Vol. VIII, *Mich. Hist. Mag.*, pp. 534-5.

Thus did Herman Melville's reputation suffer until later investigation revealed him as a creditable narrator despite the charm of his style. Surely the testimony of writers so skilled themselves, and who followed Henry's route so soon after his narrative was written as did Fuller, Jameson and Parkman and Lanman should be of some weight in proving his veracity. If not, the acid test of a trial involving such valuable stakes as did the Repentigny case, and tried at such time, should count somewhat in his favor. The United States Supreme Court gives to Henry's account the same authority as to any well-known legal writer, and his testimony is accepted as final.

STORIES OF SAINT HELENA ISLAND

THE little island of Saint Helena, "set like an emerald in the blue", lies just about two miles southwest of the bluff shore of Gros Cap, a cape on the upper peninsula of Michigan at what might be called the northwest gate to the Straits of Mackinac. The island is about one mile long northwest and southeast, and is about three-eighths of a mile across at its widest part. The little harbor of the island is on the side toward Gros Cap, where there is a small fishing village. This village is about four miles west of Saint Ignace.

From Mackinaw City and Wawatam Beach, in the light of the setting sun, the island stands out just midway between McGulpin's Point and Gros Cap (the big cape), a sentinel of the Straits. Its romantic appearance, as

It seems to rise
Against the skies,
A lovely dream come true.

has aroused much interest among tourists as to its history, but few people seem to know anything about it, save that "there is a hermit lives there", and "there are lots of old houses there", and close inquiry and long search are necessary to piece out the vague and varied reports of the activities of which it was once the center.

Why it should have been called Saint Helena is as yet a mystery. "Saint Heleen", the local fishermen and neighboring townsmen call it, and after all that is nearest its original title, for on Charlevoix's map of 1744, it is marked Isle Ste. Helene. The slight change in the pronunciation of the "e" is less radical than the anglicization of the words to Saint Helena, as printed on Lanman's map of 1841.

From the fact that it was called Isle Ste. Helene in 1744, we see that the Napoleonic legend could have had no influence in its naming. Still, it may have been named for the other island. Saint Helena was the wife of the Emperor Constantine, and the mother of Constantine the Great, and she founded several churches of humble origin. The eighteenth of August is her festival, and her

¹The name of St. Helena may have been transferred from the island of the same name near Quebec.

name became inseparably connected in legend with the commonly received story of the discovery of the cross, and in early Britain were many churches dedicated to Saint Cross and Saint Helena (St. Croix and Ste. Hélène).

There was a "new village of Ottawas" at Gros Cap in 1667² "between Pointe La Barbe and Gros Cap"³, population about fifteen hundred in 1699; but no mention is made of the island. Whether there was ever a tribe of Indians that made the island their home is doubtful, the opportunities for hunting were so limited. But that it was a favorite resort of theirs, and that its beauty was esteemed by them, is manifest from the following legend, for which we are indebted to David Corp, who sometimes styles himself "one of the hermits of Saint Helena Island".⁴

This David Corp spends a great deal of time on the island, and loves it for its old time memories. A descendant of the Martins, early settlers of Gros Cap, he is a grandson of that David Corp, a sailor trader and vessel captain, who located at Gros Cap when the water between it and Saint Helena Island was a favorite roadstead for shelter with mariners. The legend, gleaned from an old Indian, is as follows:—

Once upon a time a very beautiful Indian maiden belonging to the tribe that made their home around Gros Cap, was asked for in marriage by an old man of her nation. He made her father many handsome and valuable gifts according to the Indian custom, and thus obtained his consent to the union.

But the maiden was very unhappy, for she did not care for the elderly suitor. Visioning the loss of her girlhood freedom, the hard life she would have to live as the wife of an old and tyrannical husband, she climbed the Gros Cap Rock, still a picturesque feature of the landscape, with the intention of ending her life by leaping from its summit.

A modern balladist has given us a bit of her lament, as she bade goodbye to the scenes of her childhood before setting out into the unknown,

²Rezek's *History of the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie and Marquette*.

³Kelton, *Annals of Fort Mackinac*.

⁴The David Corp letters are in the *Burton Hist. Coll.*, Detroit Public Library.

Fare ye well, ye pines and birches,
 Fare ye well, ye flowers and grasses
 In the fragrant nooks and crannies
 On the hills and by the shore,
 Through thy lovely paths and by-ways
 Where the little birds are hiding,
 By the rocks and sandy beaches,
 I shall wander now no more.

Forest depths no more shall know me,
 Know the footsteps of their daughter,
 Rippling waters no more bathe me,
 As in happy days of yore;
 Bartered by a selfish parent,
 Better leap into oblivion,
 Than to live in lifelong bondage
 On the hills and by the shore.

But instead of being dashed to pieces on the rocks below as she had expected, she fell into the arms of a noble young warrior, far handsomer than anyone of whom she had dared to dream. They entered his canoe, and directly paddled over to Saint Helena harbor, where they lived happily ever after on Mish-aou-o-ning, the "Beautiful Island".

Undoubtedly the handsome young man of the legend is Manabozho, some of whose adventures have been incorporated in Longfellow's poem of "Hiawatha".

A later chronicler adds that the maiden's name was O-zhay-wa-shkwa-go-wo-bun-ig, as she was called for the fringed gentian, and that wherever she wandered on the island with her lover, are today to be found these lovely flowers, of a deeper blue there than are ever seen on the mainland.

This legend is referred to by Father Gagnieur.^{4a}

"Gros Cap" is "a distance of perhaps six or seven miles toward St. Ignace". This name "is a free translation of the Indian Nedinang (Naydinang), where one very old Indian told me was to be placed the legend of Lover's Leap".

Father Gagnieur has been for fifty years a member of the great order of the Catholic Church founded by St. Ignatius of Loyola, known as the "Company of Jesus" (Jesuits), of which Father Marquette was an illustrious son. Ecclesiastically, Father Gagnieur is attached to the Canadian Province of the Society, but he makes his headquarters at the Soo, and for almost thirty years has served as

^{4a} Gagnieur, *Michigan History Magazine*, II, 553.

Indian missionary in the region of the Straits. His historical knowledge, especially of the Northern peninsula of Michigan, and of Northern Wisconsin is remarkable, and his store of information was drawn on as a witness in the inter-state boundary dispute between Michigan and Wisconsin. He often serves mass in the little church of the Sacred Heart at Gros Cap. Many instances of his self sacrificing devotion to his scattered parishioners are well known in all the country round the Straits.

The region was the scene of many fierce Indian battles, and St. Helena Island was a rendezvous in one. The following accounts are taken almost literally from manuscript of David Corp, as gleaned by him from Mary Ann Mushcose, a granddaughter of Chief Anse, of the Ottawas, to whom reference will be made later.

"I have also from her the battle of the Chippewas and Ottawas against the Iroquois, the Chippewas and Ottawas having located on St. Helena and the heights of Gros Cap, the Iroquois on the heights of St. Ignace. The battle was fought in the valley between Gros Cap and St. Ignace."

"The other battle of more recent date, or I would call it a massacre, occurred at where the Gros Cap cemetery is now. About the year 1880, I helped make the cemetery, and in plowing we turned up many skeletons, and later on when they enlarged the cemetery there were more skeletons turned up.

"The battle was fought by the Chippewas and Ottawas against the Menominees who were encamped on West Moran Bay, in revenge of the treacherous murder of their great Chippewa chief, San-quan (gwan). He had a son about fifteen years of age, and the two tribes, thinking he must have inherited some of the great qualities of leadership his father had, appointed him as their leader. On the night appointed for attack, the two tribes met at St. Helena Island with their canoes. Their plans were to form two wings of canoes on each side of the bay so in attacking there would be no means of escape. It was a beautiful sight from where the canoes were, the bay (West Moran) all illuminated by the fires of hundreds of wigwams (of Menominees).

"When the fires were dying out, young San-quan dove and swam ashore noiselessly, as only an Indian can, and reconnoitered and went back of the village and gave the wolf-howl, notifying them

(the Ottawas and Chippewas) it was time to attack. As they had been approaching all this time, at the wolf-call they all left their canoes and attacked on both sides (of the encampment). As the Menominees were asleep, we can imagine it must have been horrible, as there was no quarter given and very few escaped."

In the History of the Upper Peninsula (Sawyer), is found a list of Indians known to the early settlers. Among them are "Anse and Cettago, of Saint Helena Island". This Cettago is probably the old Indian chief for whom the "Santago Turn" on the road from St. Ignace to Les Cheneaux, is named. His tribe was never confined to the island, but wandered all over the northern shores of the Straits.

Old Santigo (as it is sometimes spelled) claimed to have special knowledge of the history of the St. Loyola picture, the ancient painting in the vestibule of the Catholic Church at St. Ignace.^{4b}

Of Anse, David Corp writes:—"Chief Anse, or Hance, (derived from Hans), was born at Mackinaw City of a Dutch father. He was a powerful giant of a man, light-complexioned (for confirmation as to light-complexioned Indians, see Mrs. Bristol's paper, Wis. Hist. Colls., Vol. III, p. 303), and wore a beard. He had four wives. Petoskey married his sister. Grandfather, Captain David Corp, married Chief Anse's daughter, who bore him Ambrose Corp, my father, and a daughter. Point au Chine, five miles east of Gros Cap was an Indian settlement where Chief Anse or Hanse lived. My father, Ambrose Corp, lived with him until he was twelve years of age. In looking over U. S. Indian treaties, I find Chief Anse, signed Hance, (with a cross) went to Washington and signed the 1836 treaty under President Jackson's administration.^{4c} Father told us his grandfather and Chief Shawbwawa⁵ were invited to see the president in the house he resided (in). He says the President was a tall gaunt man, and he mentioned the open fireplace and big logs used. . . . With other tribes, they had fought on the British side in the War of 1812. I saw one of the large gold medals that was awarded to the chiefs by the British." In the treaty, this chief is given as "Ains, of Oak Point" (Point aux Chênes).

It is not strange that we find no mention of the little island in the early fur-trading days, when the canoes, as says James C. Mills in

^{4b} Mich. Hist. Mag., XXII, 240-5; XXV, 168-187.

^{4c} Fuller, *Economic and Social Beginnings of Michigan*, 527.

⁵For Shawbwana, see Gagnieur, *Michigan History Mag.* II, 529.

Our Inland Seas, "followed the shores closely", and there was no object in interrupting a journey by visiting the place. Mrs. Therese Baird's *Reminiscences*⁶ gives the usual route of a canoe trip from Green Bay to Mackinac Island, the depot of fur trade. The last stop before Mackinac Island was at Pointe La Barbe (between Gros Cap and St. Ignace) to freshen up appearances for the entry to the metropolis of the North. As the company hurried along, it is probable that they hardly noticed little Saint Helena, so eager were they to land at the Pointe and begin their preparations for the triumphant arrival at the larger island.

It was not until the fisheries commenced to supplant the fur trade, and the sail boat the canoe, that the advantages of the little harbor of Saint Helena, a sure haven from the storms on Lake Michigan, began to be appreciated.

Clifton Johnson says,⁷ "After the winding up of the affairs of the American Fur Company, individual merchants at Mackinac continued the fur trade, but it constantly declined until it entirely disappeared from the island. Meanwhile the fishing business had become increasingly important. Whitefish and trout began to be sent to the Buffalo market about 1824. More and more were shipped as the years passed and all the fishing grounds for one hundred and fifty miles around brought their catch to Mackinac Island to be sorted, salted and packed."

Minor stations sprang up all along the shores and on the islands. Among these was one around the harbor of Saint Helena Island. In 1849 the island was patented to Wm. Belote. There was probably quite a settlement there at that time, at least during the summer months. Most of the fishermen around the Straits spent their winters at Mackinac Island, and many at their old homes down Lake Erie way. There was a store at St. Helena, and a few families may have wintered there.

As steamboats became common on the lakes, then came prosperous days for the small lake ports. During the time that the steamers burned wood, they had to make many stops all along the way from Detroit to Chicago. St. Helena was one of the regular station stops,

⁶*Wisconsin Historical Collections*, XIV.

⁷*Highways and Byways of the Great Lakes*.

and the early travellers mention it as a "port of call", the last before launching out into Lake Michigan.

Sailboats were still the main carriers of the lakes, the fisherman's and trader's dependence. They penetrated to the most isolated inlets and bays. In Sprague's History of Grand Traverse and Leelanau Counties, an incident is related that shows the value of the harbor of St. Helena to the early sailing boats.

"The first bride who came to the Grand Traverse country was Mrs. Lewis Miller, whose maiden name was Katherine Kilty. She was a native of London, England, who had found her way to America and then to the outpost of civilization at Mackinac. During Mr. Miller's frequent visits to that place from the pioneer settlement at Old Mission, an attachment had grown up which finally resulted in their marriage in September, 1845. Immediately after the wedding they set sail in the little sloop "Lady of the Lake" for their home in the wilderness. Miller had chartered the vessel for the occasion, and had loaded her with goods for the Indian trade, as well as furniture and supplies for housekeeping. The "Lady" was a wee bit of a craft, but she was a perfect duck on the water, and fleet before anything like a favorable wind. It was the season of variable winds. The first day they made the island of St. Helena, where they were compelled to seek the shelter of the harbor for the night. There were a dozen sail or more there waiting for a favorable change. Several times next day the "Lady of the Lake" ventured out but was as often compelled to put back. Finally, seizing the most favorable opportunity, she was able to reach Little Traverse. Here she was compelled to wait four days. Leaving there, the vessel reached the mouth of Grand Traverse Bay, when she was again driven back." It took nearly two days more for them to reach Old Mission, their destination.

It seems strange now, viewing the deserted harbor of St. Helena, to imagine its onetime importance. Michael McNally, one of the older residents of Mackinac Island (he was born at St. Ignace in 1845, and was at one time Sheriff of Mackinac County), who used to fish in this region in the palmy days of that trade, says he remembers seeing from fifty to one hundred sail in the little bay.



1. The boat that brought us to St. Helena Island.
2. Old log house in the woods, east of the school house, St. Helena Island.
3. The school house.
4. Modern crosses at Gros Cap cemetery on the mainland.

The harbor, once a port of call,
Is quite forgot today,
The once proud piers
For fifty years
Have rotted toward decay.

As the fishing trade increased in the vicinity, the Newtons, a firm of brothers, headed by Archie Newton, a man of unusual business ability, became interested in St. Helena, and about 1853 they bought out Belote. "Their heirs have been the owners until very recently various other persons obtained an interest for a short time, but it came back always to the Newtons."

In the book by Elizabeth Whitney Williams, called "A Child of the Sea", is given a vivid picture of the harbor activities in the early days, about 1847. Although she was barely five years old when her father and mother went to St. Helena, it is not strange that she should have a clear recollection of her adventures there, especially as these memories would be re-inforced by those of the other members of the family. Her father, Walter Whitney⁸ was called there to build a boat, the "trading schooner, 'Eliza Caroline'"⁹ for the Newtons. She tells interestingly the many incidents of their life there, of the visit "of the little schooner bound for Green Bay, the Mecca of the West at that time," of the coming of Aunt Abbie Courchane with her three little girls,—“Mr. Courchane was a ship-carpenter by trade and came to help finish the vessel”, of her own adventure, a narrow escape from drowning; and of the launching of the boat, followed by a trip to Mackinac Island and return,—“nearly all the people in the little town took passage.”

The building of this ship is also mentioned in "Old Settlers of Grand Traverse Bay" (Wait and Anderson).

Elizabeth Whitney Williams' affection for the island is expressed in the following extract from her book:—

"St. Helena—dear little drop in the sea. How can I describe it as I saw it in after years? I called there on a trip down the lakes on the steamer 'Galena' with Captain Steel as master. We steamed

⁸War Department, Adjutant General's Office, October 6, 1925. The Records show that Walter Whitney enlisted June 29, 1832, at Buffalo, N. Y., and was honorably discharged June 28, 1837, at Fort Brady, Michigan, by expiration of term of service, a private, Company B, 2nd U. S. Infantry.

⁹Michael McNally says the "Eliza Caroline" was not built on St. Helena, but was brought by Capt. Kirkland from Lake Erie. Alonzo Cheesman says the "Eliza Caroline" was bought by the Newtons at or near Bay City.

There may easily have been a mistake in the name. Possibly two boats of the same name, as in the case of the "Lady of the Lake."

into a pretty little basin of a harbor almost surrounded by green trees. The sun was just rising out from the water in the far distance, the sky was purple, orange and pink. As I looked out of my stateroom window and saw before me the beautiful little Isle of Saint Helena, I cannot describe my feelings; a few of the memories of my childhood days came back to me. My little brothers, with myself playing along the shore, but now all was quiet and still. I had heard father and mother speak about it so many times, it seemed as though I saw it all through their eyes. It now looked to me like a lovely little toy. The water so clear and sparkling in the morning sunlight. The dock was in good repair, everything seemed clean, quiet and still. Mr. Newton's house I recognized at once, it being the largest. The little harbor seemed almost a perfect horseshoe in shape, the shore all around was covered with clean, white gravel, the trees were mixed with birch, balsam, cedar, pine and poplar. The island is much greater in length than breadth.

Sweet little, dear little isle of the sea,
The grand old waves shall dash upon thy shore
When we who once have trod thy lovely beach
Are known to earth no more."

According to her recollection, this visit to the island was made by Mrs. Williams in 1857.

The fishing business was carried on much as the fur-trading had been. Strickland in *Old Mackinac* (1860) says the work was done by men in the employ of merchants who advanced outfits in summer, realizing on them the next year. He gives the value of a fishing outfit at that time as; boat, about two hundred dollars, nets six hundred dollars more or less. The barrels and salt were a good part of the expense, a quarter of a barrel of salt was needed to a barrel of fish. The Newtons had a large store and coopershop, and gave credit there for outfits, took fish in payment and marketed them. It was due to this arrangement and the leadership consequently acquired by the Newtons, that St. Helena was drawn into the controversy surrounding the occupation of Beaver Island by the Mormons, and became the scene of an incident of the history of the kingdom of James Jesse Strang, the leader of the sect.

In order to appreciate the background of these scenes, it seems necessary to give here a brief synopsis of the causes that led to them.

The reception by the press of a recent biography of Brigham Young by H. R. Werner, shows that there is still interest to be found in the history of that peculiar sect known as Mormons, and one reviewer says, "Fiction contains nothing more dramatic and engrossing than the creation of a new and enduring religion by a poverty-stricken country boy, and the creation of a new state,—for a long time virtually a new nation—by his successors". The reviewer refers also to the "staggering bibliography" accompanying the biography, and indeed so much has been written about the Mormons, it would seem that few could be found who had not some knowledge of the organization, though with most of us it is rather vague. The Church of the Latter Day Saints was founded in 1830, today it numbers something like 400,000 members. It grew out of the purported visions of Joseph Smith of Palmyra, New York, and the alleged finding of golden plates on which the original Mormon Bible was written. Smith gathered many adherents, and they emigrated to Kirtland, Ohio, and afterwards to Missouri. Driven out of that State, they went to Nauvoo, Illinois, where in 1842, Smith was at the height of his leadership. Later, antagonizing some of his followers, he and his brother were jailed by the civil authorities. Both were taken from the jail by a mob and shot. Their deaths brought up the question of a successor to Joseph Smith as head of the church.

Not many months previous to the tragedy, James J. Strang, a young Wisconsin lawyer, originally from New York State, had joined the Mormons, and seems to have been at once singled out by Smith for unusual notice. After the death of Smith, Strang considered his own position so strong that he entered the lists as a contender for the succession, showing a letter ostensibly signed by the dead Prophet, promising him the place in the event of Smith's death.

But the Council of Twelve elected Brigham Young. This drove the other candidates out of the church. Sidney Rigdon went with a small party to Pennsylvania, where in a short time his influence vanished; Lyman Wight took a group to Texas; while Strang retreated to Voree, Wisconsin, there to "plant another stake in Zion".

No better record exists of the removal of Strang to Beaver Island than is found in the book by Elizabeth Whitney Williams already quoted, *A Child of the Sea*, which has as its subtitle, *Life Among*

suffered cold and hunger and death that winter, without complaint of their king."

Those Mormons who came the next year seemed to have more to help themselves with. At the same time more people not of their sect came to the island. By then several cooper-shops and store establishments were erected. The Whitney family usually had some of the Ohio fishermen boarding with them.

Very soon the Mormons, owing to steady proselyting all over the Middle West, and even into New York State, had so many additions to their ranks that they quite outnumbered the fishermen. As they felt themselves "the Chosen People", they did not hesitate to take from those who would not join their church, anything they wanted. Disputes arose over titles to the land. Any of the Mormons who showed the least sympathy with their old neighbors, the "Gentiles", as they were taught to call them, were dealt with severely. As the latter saw that there was little chance for them, most of them left the island; some, like the Cables, McKinleys and Wrights, abandoning very valuable property.

It was in 1850 that Strang was crowned King, with theatric ceremonies. Strang, himself, in his controversial defense, called "Ancient and Modern Michilimackinac", asserts that there was an organized effort on the part of the fishermen of the entire region to overcome and drive out the Mormons at this time. No other account of this attack has so far been found. It was about this time that Strang proclaimed that he had had a revelation commanding that polygamy must be practiced. This was a shock to most of his followers. Many of his people were becoming disaffected. A "Society of the Covenant", similar to Joseph Smith's "Danite Band", had been organized within the church to deal with the hesitant and to persecute the non-believers.

When finally only a few *Gentiles*, some seven families beside the Whitneys, were left on the island, Elizabeth Whitney Williams says, "one morning about the first of November, a messenger came to every Gentile family with a letter from the King, saying every Gentile family must come to the Harbor and be baptised into the Church of Zion, or leave the island within ten days after receiving the notice signed by the King James J. Strang. Within twenty-four hours after receiving the notice every Gentile family had gone

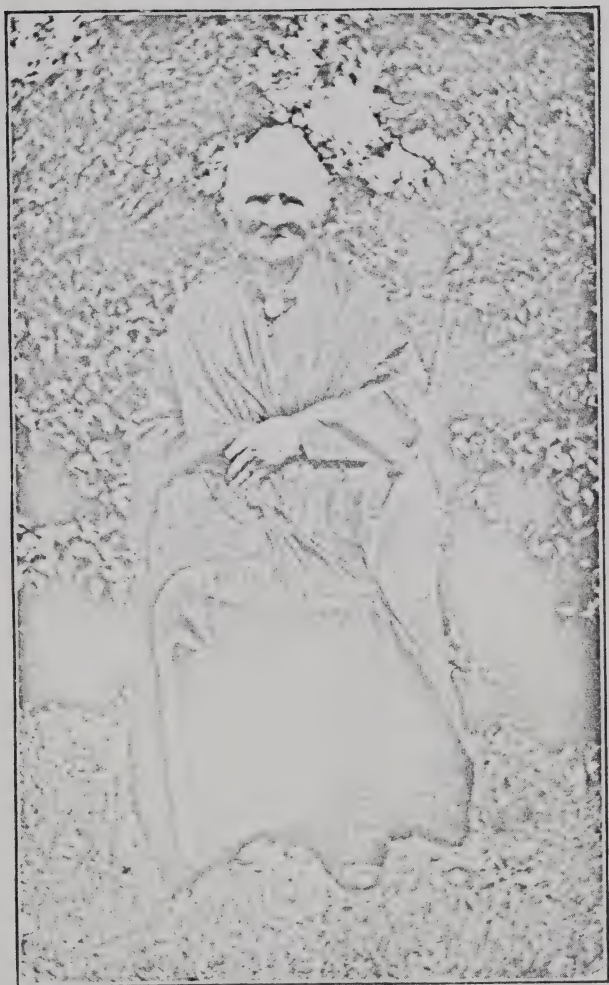
but ours, they had taken what they could in their fish-boats. Our boat being small, father had sent word for a vessel to come to take us away". They waited anxiously. "It was the fourth day" "Our goods were packed, and every day some Mormons could be seen walking along the beach, each carrying a gun, but watching for a sail." It was the evening of the ninth day when "I was awakened to board a little vessel anchored in front of our house. All was loaded except a few boxes and two large trunks. When Father and John started to go back to the shore after them, several men were standing beside the goods and each had a gun in his hands. This was enough. Father knew the rest of our goods must be left."

Sailing away toward Charlevoix, "as we looked back we could see the door of our house stood open as our door had always been to strangers or any who needed help. And some of those who now stood on the shore with guns pointed toward us had been fed and cared for by my people."

The evicted Whitneys sought shelter in Charlevoix, then called "Pine River", but were soon harried thence, for the Strangites came over to threaten the settlers there,¹² and they went on to Traverse City, which was a comparatively strong Gentile outpost, though not so secure but that they were often alarmed by rumors of threatened Mormon raids.

In the meantime on the neighboring islands and on the mainland, every effort was made to check the lawlessness of this kingdom that had become a law unto itself. The merchants and influential men at Mackinac Island and St. Helena appealed again and again to the government of state and nation. It was about as satisfactory as the attempts in recent years to control the House of David. Twice Strang was arrested and tried, only to win complete exoneration by his oratory and finesse. He had succeeded in being twice elected to the Legislature of the state, and had won his way to his seat over a contest. By his political agility and adroitness he

¹²This encounter, with its threats of future vengeance by the Mormons, which made the settlers judge discretion the better part and flight their best plan, was known as the Battle of Pine River, so-called in a pamphlet issued by Strang concerning it. The Mormon Sheriff, Jonathan Pierce, under pretext of serving subpoenas, endeavored to get possession of two or three former members of the church, who had fled to the settlement for shelter. The fishermen refused to give them up, and Louis Gebeau, a half-brother of Elizabeth Whitney Williams, was wounded by the Mormons. (*Mich. Hist. Colls.* Vol. XXXII). See mention of the monument commemorating this event, *Mich. Hist. Mag.* Vol. XXV, p. 125.



"Grandma Ranville," who lived on Saint Helena Island
when she was a little girl.

had the county seat changed from Mackinac Island to St. James, as he had renamed the harbor at Beaver. This placed in his hands all the machinery of justice, which was unfairly and unsparingly used to punish his enemies and any among his followers who deserted the kingdom or questioned his sway.

The Newtons were in a fair way to become bankrupt. Constant raids on the fisheries under their patronage, the confiscation of catch and outfits, made their fishing business around the upper end of Lake Michigan a certain loss.

The Mormon raiders even dared to land on St. Helena, the very stronghold of the Newtons. An extract from a letter from one of the descendants of the Newtons, who was a small girl at the time, gives some idea of the boldness of their methods.¹³

"I can remember one night Mother called us all in and said we must go to bed early and charged us to keep quiet and she would put out all the lights, as the Mormons had landed on the island. I remember how frightened we were. Next morning we found they had stolen a lot of stuff and even took one of the oxen. Took it (to the) back of the island, killed and dressed it and carried it off."

In the biography of United States Marshal Philo Beers, in the History of Grand Traverse and Leelanau Counties, are found some more picturesque details of a typical Mormon raid, details not likely to have been perceived by a little girl hiding her frightened head in the pillows while terror reigned without. "With their fleet of swift-winged vessels, their sails tan-colored to shield them from observation at night, they would swoop down on the unsuspecting settlers slumbering in their beds, and relieve them of any undefended property. Many a cargo of young sheep and hogs, or of fish and nets, did these marauders bear away in spite of all precaution or watchfulness. Mr. Beers had on one occasion to lament the loss of all his nets and their contents and on another of all the lighthouse supplies". (He was at that time keeper of a light on Traverse Bay).

Probably at the time of the raid on St. Helena, the Mormons had obtained knowledge that most of the men were away, so that their buccaneer boats, perhaps even those of the picturesque names listed by Mr. Beers, "Night-hawk", "Dark Cloud", "Fly-by-Night", and

¹³This Mead-Newton letter may be consulted in the *Burton Hist. Colls.*, Detroit Public Library.

"Dread-naught", dared sweep down into the little harbor and go again with none to stay them.

Beers says, "Many a night men lay in waiting for them but those were the nights when they were elsewhere, a very few encounters were recorded."

It was from within that the kingdom of Strang received its death-blow. The disputes over the doctrine and practice of polygamy, together with the lawless methods of the "Pirate Band" of the Society of the Covenant, were the undoing of the leader. Whether or not he sanctioned all the acts of his followers, he paid the penalty for them.

Leach says that "the history of the rise and fall of the Mormon Kingdom of Beaver Island affords a striking example of systematic, organized and widespread lawlessness, lawlessly punished."

In June, 1856, Strang was shot by two of his former adherents. He was taken from Beaver Island to Voree, Wisconsin, where he died on July 9, 1856. Four or five of the disaffected families of the island, beside those of the two men who had shot Strang, not feeling it safe to remain after the shooting for fear of being punished by the "Band", fled to Mackinac Island.

The news that Strang had been shot was carried swiftly around the widely scattered settlements, and when this news was followed by the report of his removal to Voree, an expedition was organized and set out from St. Helena to recover the lost property of the merchants and fishermen, and to drive off the more dangerous of Strang's followers.

Then was the little harbor thronged
With fishers and their boats,
Canoes and skiffs and sloops, they used
Most every craft that floats.

Then was there gathering in the dusk,
And hurrying in the dawn,
From Epoufette, from Pointe aux Chenes,
Where'er the news had gone.

From Manistique to Rabbit's Back,
Seule Choix and far Death's Door,
The Poverty and Summer Isles
Each sent their three or four.

From Scott's Point and from Mille Coquin
They came to Saint Helene,
"Arch Newton now must lead us on,
We'll sweep the Beavers clean!"

The King is gone! But ne'er again
Shall king live here!" they cry,
"We've had enough of kingdoms, now
That this king's reign is by."

And Louis Gebeau's youthful grin
Was darkened by a vow,
"I can forgive my wound," he said,
"But not Aunt Loaney's cow."

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Aunt Loany was one of the first settlers on Beaver Island, at Loany's Point. She had a cow and furnished all the children, Gentiles and Mormons alike, with milk. Her cow was later "confiscated."

For conveying the avenging party to Beaver Island, a schooner, the C. L. Abel, owned and commanded by Captain Wagley of Cross Village, was chartered. No doubt the Mormons anticipated some such expedition. Leach, in his History of Grand Traverse Region, says that Strang, feeling his own helplessness, recommended that the leading men, probably those most obnoxious to the Gentiles, should leave the island. In accordance with this advice, a large number went, some taking their families with them, and others lacking means of transportation, leaving their women and children.

Of this expedition, there are not so many accounts as of many of the incidents of the Mormon occupation.¹⁴ Fear of the vengeance of the members of the Pirate Band played its part in suppressing some accounts. For years every visitor to the Beavers has heard of the unpublished history written by Neil Gallagher, and there is also record of a manuscript by William Boyle, but rumor had it that they felt it inexpedient to print them during their lifetime.

Leach gives an account of the punitive expedition as reported by "Mr. W——, a Mormon gentleman of probity and candor". This account makes out a rather hard case for the fishermen. "Mr. W——" may have been a man of probity and candor, but he shows himself so rabid a Mormon, so fanatic a follower of Strang, that it is not to be wondered at that his narrative is somewhat over-lurid. In this account, A. P. Newton is designated as "Mr. N——", and others figure likewise by initials, a convenience for anyone who did not wish his "probity and candor" questioned.

¹⁴Much of interest was learned from Judge Steere, who knew Capt. Wagley in later years. The judge thought the avengers unnecessarily severe, but said the account agreed with Mrs. Williams' in general.

Leach says a party of sixty or seventy men was assembled at St. Helena Island, "all eager to lend a hand in punishing the common enemy. Nominally the party was under the leadership of Archie Newton, practically it was an irresponsible mob."

Mrs. Williams retells the circumstances as narrated to her by her brother, Louis Gebeau, who "was one of the men chosen to help preserve law and order in the sending away of the Mormons after the king was shot." She says, "All were allowed to take their goods, though many did not do so." The explanation for this seems to be found in their distraught state after they learned their king was dead. "No doubt they were afraid of the Gentiles, thinking great harm would be done to them. The feeling had become so bitter between them that in a great many cases justice was not done when it should have been." The rest of her narrative breathes the same spirit of tolerance and pity.

From the few written sources, re-inforced by numerous inquiries among relatives of participants in the expedition, and some biographical sketches of both Mormons and Gentiles concerned, the following seems to stand as a fair statement of the facts.

There were probably less than fifty men who left St. Helena in the C. L. Abel—others in their own boats may have joined them—and steamed straight to the harbor of St. James. They found the people there thoroughly disorganized, and the mandate that all Mormons must leave the island was accepted with submission; the fishermen went to the outlying farms and told all the occupants of them to gather in the harbor, and as soon as a boat came in, they must leave.

As an indication of the character of a typical follower of Strang, the story of his conversion to Mormonism, told by Wingfield Watson, when he was ninety-four years old, may be of interest here.¹⁵

"I was converted to Mormonism some seventy-two years ago in the vicinity of St. Louis (Missouri), by reading P. P. Pratt's *Voice of Warning to All Nations*, . . . and never did any book come into my hands that wrought such a change in my feelings as did that book. . . . It gave me so much love for the Bible I could then read it with joy, instead of the gloomiest feelings and forebodings."

¹⁵The Wingfield-Watson letters are in the *Burton Hist. Colls.*, Detroit Public Library.

Going by chance to Wisconsin, he there found a copy of "The Book of Mormon", which he read "with great interest and pleasure". He went from Wisconsin to St. Louis again, hoping to join one of the bodies of "Saints" that started for Utah every spring. Arrived too late, he was advised to return to Wisconsin, where he would be notified as to when another party was ready.

"I started back, and on that boat going up I found that there was a Strangite elder with his wife going to Nauvoo to visit his mother there. He told me of the appointment of Mr. Strang by Joseph Smith, and that Mr. Strang was 'translating the Ancient Book of the Law of the Lord from the plates of Laban'; and various other things, all of which were strange and new to me. Anyway I made up my mind to get off at Nauvoo and return with this man to Beaver Island, and to be brief, we landed on Beaver Island on the sixteenth day of June, 1852. Saw Mr. Strang and several of his leading men and had a hearty handshake of welcome from them all. I was then in my twenty-fourth year. After landing here I have had many reflections. Could I have made a mistake in coming here, and if so, wherein? Mr. Strang was said to be "meeker than Moses and more patient than Job" and surely no one has ever undertaken to disprove the saying. He was a mighty man in eloquence, logic and argument. He sometimes would preach over two hours and I never felt tired hearing him, and don't know that anyone else did. I lived in the vicinity four years on Beaver Island, and never thought that six miles of a rough road was too far to go to hear him. He had great backing that he was appointed by revelation given through Joseph Smith appointing him to succeed him in the prophetic office, none of his enemies ever wished to meet him on that question." . . .

Mr. Watson died in October, 1923, aged ninety-four and a half years, just a few months after writing the above in a letter. He had spent the greater part of his life in an effort to revive the Church Strang had founded and to vindicate the memory of his lost leader. He reprinted Strang's "Old and New Michilimackinac", and many of his pamphlets. In his preface to the reprint he says,—

"Mr. Strang was once asked by one of the honorable gentlemen of Northern Michigan—himself a leading mobocrat—if it was not a principle of Mormonism for Mormons to steal from the Gentiles? "No," said Mr. Strang, "but they do believe in the principles of

honorable warfare", (an apparent contradiction to the "meeker than Moses" claim).

Mr. Henry McConnell says, "Some years after the expulsion, Wingfield Watson came back and settled on a homestead between Walloon and Pine Lakes, a fine man and a good speaker. He made many converts to Mormonism in his neighborhood, think at one time that they had a church in Boyne City. I used to meet him frequently, he was an interesting talker, but he must be upwards of ninety, for this was some forty years ago (Written February 23, 1922). Watson was a fanatic on Mormonism but sincere. He was fairly educated, well-informed and a gentleman."

The "Keystone State" was soon due, and as it was July, no particular hardship was endured by most of these hardy people during the wait. No physical violence was used or needed. Many of the Strangites were glad to get away. The fact that many joined colonies of Gentiles on the mainland of Michigan would indicate that they were not in abject terror of their neighbors. Most of them left on the Keystone State and went to Milwaukee and Chicago, and from there either to Voree or to their former homes. The tabernacle was burned, but Mrs. Williams' description of the island a year later does not show that "the torch was applied" as recklessly as one or two accounts would indicate. She says the library of the king was afterward used by the school. Probably the Mormon pamphlets suffered most. Men were left to patrol the island, and within a year afterward most of the Gentiles formerly there had returned. These were mostly French, Scotch and Yankee, with but a small mixture of the Irish fishermen who have since become the principal inhabitants.

John C. Wright has a play in verse called, *The Tragedy of Beaver Island*. He has Archie Newton for the leader of the Gentiles, and seems in general to have followed Mrs. Williams' account of the expulsion.

As the Newtons and the other fishermen and merchants returned to their homes, leaving a few men to guard the Beavers, it was probably with the consciousness of an accomplishment of some moment to their future peace. Certain it is that it was Strang's intention not only to make the Beavers the seat of his kingdom, but to extend his sovereignty to all the country round.

Perhaps he had been sincere in his conversion to the Mormon religion at Nauvoo, a few weeks after the death of his little daughter Mary, but his faith soon came to be used as a pawn in his struggle for earthly dominance. An interesting sidelight on his character is shown by careful reading of the following extracts from his "Ancient and Modern Michilimackinac":

After a garbled account of the work of the Jesuit Missionaries he says, "Had they remained here until 1759, their converts would have become too numerous to have been affected by the fall of Quebec and might easily have maintained a separate national existence after France ceded all her possessions to Great Britain". Their very secluded situation he speaks of as an asset, and feels that "they have sacrificed an empire"; and further on, he tells how in other places "the missions have built up popular and prosperous communities, some of them worthy of a separate national existence." . . . "Had the Jesuits separated from the nations of Europe and built up their missions as an independent State, who will dare assert that they could not have attained to the Empire of America?" So speaks ambition, and "by that sin fell the angels."

The collapse of his power restored peace and prosperity to the Straits and to St. Helena. The Newtons flourished and it was not long before they were also firmly established at Cheboygan. St. Helena had already contributed to the comfort of Cheboygan, for in the Centennial History of Cheboygan is a note that the first steamer to touch at Duncan (then the port of Cheboygan) was the "General Scott" in 1847, and that she brought a yoke of oxen from St. Helena Island. They were thrown overboard and swam ashore.

In 1848, two Mormon families had come to Cheboygan from Beaver Island. Both men worked for Newton. One man, it is said in the History of Cheboygan and Mackinac Counties, had had five wives. Two had left him, and one died while they were in Cheboygan. He was a boatbuilder and went over to St. Helena Island to work for the Newtons. There they remained for many years. Mr. Newton's daughter says, "he was a boatbuilder and carpenter. The Newtons gave him all the work he could do. He lived very peaceably, kept his two wives, no one interfered in that line." Evidently the Newtons respected his sincerity, and his desire to deal equitably by both his families, and as long as the spread of the

doctrine had been effectually checked, they did not fear its effects. This circumstance is the probable cause of a legend current among the modern dwellers at Mackinaw City, that "there are old Mormon houses on St. Helene, there used to be Mormons there." One story even has it that this island was the first settlement of the Mormons before they went to Beaver. Rather ironic that the rendezvous of their enemies should have that reputation.

In 1873 the first lighthouse was built on St. Helena Island. The name of the first keeper is given by the Bureau of Lighthouses as Thomas P. Dunn, and he served from July 29, 1873, to June 13, 1875. The light tower is very picturesque, and attached to a very comfortable dwelling. The light is thus described in Bulletin 32, Survey of Northern and Northwestern Lakes, "On the southeast end (of the island) is St. Helena lighthouse, which displays a red flash 0.5 second, eclipse 4.5 seconds, visible 13 miles, and serves as a guide to vessels bound North-westward through the South Channel of the Straits of Mackinac".

The lighthouse adds much to the romance and beauty of the island. From McGulpin's Point on the south shore of the straits on a clear day the view is indescribably charming.

I can hear the pines a-swishin',
'Gainst the wind from out the north,
And I'm most worn out with wishin'
And I'd give all I am worth

Just to see once more the island
That the folks call Saint Heleen,
As we've seen it from the high land
White light tower against the green.

Some few years ago the keepers at St. Helena Light Station were discontinued and the light changed to an acetylene light,—to use the phraseology of the department, "the light was made unattended."

The age of romance is rapidly changing through the efforts of modern science. In a recent single year, seventy-four stations in the United States were changed from the man-operated to the automatic status.¹⁰ A device now in use turns off the light when the sun shines and turns it on again when darkness comes. Two rods are placed side by side, identical in mass and material and rigidly joined together at the top. They employ the principle of the con-

¹⁰*New York Times Magazine*, Nov. 8, 1925.

version of light into heat and the heat into thermal energy. One of these rods is so made as to be highly reflective and repels all light that strikes it. The second is coated with lampblack. This blackened rod absorbs the heat and lengthens. In doing so it turns off the supply of acetylene. As twilight comes on, the black rod cools, assuming its accustomed length. This shrinkage opens the gas-valve and the light resumes.

One of the last keepers was Joseph La Fountain, and many tales are told of the faithfulness of this keeper and of his daughter Jane who used to aid him in his work. "In February, 1913, the keeper of St. Helena light, saved the lives of two men who were lost on the ice in a blizzard while attempting to cross the straits; he went out with a handsled and brought in the exhausted men," as we learn in Putnam's Lighthouses and Lightships of the United States, 1917.

La Fountain or Fountain, is said to have been keeper there for twenty years, and after he left could never bear to revisit the island, he mourned it so. Of his daughter Jane, Mrs. Elizabeth Whitney Williams writes in a letter, "I only wish I could tell you some special incident about Jane LaFountain. I only heard how loyal she was in helping her father to attend to the lightkeeping duties at St. Helena, how she used to take the launch herself and go to St. Ignace for their mail and supplies. I heard of her from our lighthouse repair parties when they used to come to my station to make repairs. I never had much opportunity to see or know other lighthouses except my own, that kept me a busy woman." During a large part of the time that Joseph LaFountain was keeper, he had no paid assistant.

Jane LaFountain died in May, 1925, faithfully caring for the motherless family of her brother, as she had formerly faithfully cared for the light on Saint Helena Island.

Even before the establishment of the light on St. Helena, that island had contributed to the lighting of the straits. McKinnon, in *Atlantic and Transatlantic Sketches*, (1862) describes the building of a lighthouse on what he calls "Ware-e-chance", meaning Wau-goshance, known on the landmaps as Temperance Point, and to the modern mariner as "the Shanks".

"The lighthouse of Warechance is a remarkable structure. Before commencing the foundation, an accurate model was taken of the crest of the reef. A wooden frame, 100 x 90, was then built on a neighboring island, St. Helena, and towed to the reef. This huge structure was divided into compartments leaving a large hollow sphere in the center of the lighthouse. By the aid of several cables and anchors, the frame was adjusted in its place, and then sunk by filling the compartments with ponderous stones. So well was the shape fitted to the bottom that it sank exactly square, all parts bearing evenly on the reef. This was a task of great difficulty, as the north side was in four feet and the south side in fifteen feet of water. The building is now substantially fixed. The hollow center is completely filled with hydraulic cement and raised some feet above the surface of the water. A massive brick tower sixty feet high arises from this solid foundation." (1851).

Though done under the superintendence of the officers of the Lake Survey, the Newtons were doubtless largely employed in this work. Mrs. Williams, in "Child of the Sea," mentions their being employed in rebuilding the lighthouse at Beaver while she was keeper there.

The building described by McKinnon replaced the first lightship on the lakes, the Louis McLean, located at Waugoshance in 1832, and mentioned by Harriet Martineau in 1836.

Neither Martineau or McKinnon speak of the establishment at St. Helena, but W. P. Strickland in his book, *Old Mackinaw or the Fortress of the Lake and Its Surroundings*, (1860), gives it a paragraph,

"St. Helena is a small island in the Straits of Mackinaw, not far from the shore of the Northern Peninsula, containing a few acres over a section of land. It is a great fishing station and enjoys a good harbor protected from westerly winds. Its owner, who has exiled himself a la Napoleon, spends his time in fishing and other pursuits adapted to his mind."

Rather misleading this last sentence, however; bringing up a vision of a solitary fisherman, a recluse from the world, when in fact the island was at that time the scene of manifold activities.

David Corp, in a sketch of an incident of about that date, gives the following description of life on the island,—



Scenes on St. Helena Island: Upper left—Shore line of harbor. Upper right: The old lighthouse. Lower left: Ruins of the old cooper shop. Lower right: The old log school house with modern addition.

"At the time of St. Helena's greatest prosperity before the Civil War, Newton Brothers, Wilson and A. P. Newton, who owned St. Helena Island, did the only commercial business for miles around. In the fall nearly whole steamboat-loads were landed there. . . . They bought furs, fish and maple sugar from the natives around, and one can imagine (the Indians) stringing along with their ponies from all points of the compass, sometimes at the risk of their lives when the ice was making in December and in the break-up in April. They would come with whole strings of ponies from Cross Village and vicinity with tons of maple sugar for trade. They did not fear rotten ice as the horses were so light they could fairly wade through rotten ice. . . . A. P. Newton moved to Cheboygan and Wilson, his brother, looked after their interests here. Many times the merchants at Cheboygan and Mackinac Island (there was nothing at St. Ignace) would run out of groceries and would send strings of horses to get their supplies at St. Helena."

The schooling on the island was evidently prized. One of the Newton descendants tells of a boy coming there to do chores for his schooling and board. "We always had a good school six months of winter taught by Mr. Douglas, who was also book-keeper in the store. Then we had three months summer school, taught by a lady teacher."

Captain James Davenport of Mackinaw City used to sail the "Frances Ada" along the North shore from Manistique to St. Helena, for the Newtons, between the sixties and seventies, bringing back the fish from the various stations, perhaps carrying some on to Mackinac Island. Captain Davenport is a grandson of Ambrose Davenport who was with Major Holmes when he was killed at the battle on Mackinac Island in the War of 1812, and who acted as guide to Colonel Croghan. Captain James Davenport served his apprenticeship at lightkeeping at Ludington and Waugoshance, and was for a long time before his retirement light keeper at McGulpin's Point. He remembers driving over the ice from Mackinac Island to the parties and dances at St. Helena. These were gay affairs, and attended by the elite of the country round.

As late as the winter of 1881, Mrs. Abigail McVeigh, now of Mackinaw City (she is the daughter of Margaret Courchane Ranville, the "baby Margareth" mentioned in *Child of the Sea*), attended

a party at St. Helena. She was visiting at St. Ignace, and they drove from there to Gros Cap, and then across on the ice to the island, to "Obe" Newton's home where they were celebrating his birthday. They had an elaborate supper, oyster stew, roast chicken and all the "trimmings" usually served with a banquet. She was astonished at the elegance of the napery and silver. They danced in the old cooper shop, four sets at once,—quadrilles, Virginia Reel, Scotch reels, minuet and all the dances of that day. She knew all the people, as her Grandfather Courchane had been a boatbuilder on the island.

It was the gradual decline of the fishing business that depopulated St. Helena. The diminishing market needs for fish can now be taken care of by a very few fishermen since the introduction of power boats and the gill nets.

A. P. Newton went to Cheboygan, where in 1876, he was the first President of the village. Wilson Newton died, and Obadiah Newton is now living on the mainland.

For many years the hermit John Easton who is reputed to have fled here some thirty-five years ago after a disappointment in love, has been the only regular resident. In 1923 his home on the island, a good house built by Joseph Rapin, was burned, and a collection was taken up at Gros Cap and St. Ignace to aid him in re-establishing himself. He afterward fitted out another old house as a dwelling place. David Corp has wintered on the island "making cedar", and summered there fishing for a long time off and on, when not engaged elsewhere. Charles Hessel, one of the owners, kept a cabin on the old site, which he occupies on his visits to the place.

Prentiss Brown, a prominent attorney of St. Ignace, at present financially interested in the island, has been very good in giving information about it. He writes, "The Newtons, dominant merchants and fishermen, were by far the most prominent family in this part of the country. There is only one left and he is Obadiah Newton of Gould City. He was born on the island. Several of the Newtons are buried on the mainland near the island (in the old cemetery at Gros Cap). I understand it was the chief commercial point in the Straits locality, even exceeding Mackinac Island in the fifties and sixties. I was over there once last summer and once this fall (written in December, 1925). The ruins of seven

or eight very well built frame houses can be seen, and evidence of extensive activity. The water on the northeast side is very deep. In fact, at two points on the bay, the water is twenty feet deep within ten feet of the shore."

The depth of water spoken of by Mr. Brown is yet valued by the lake mariners. April 19, 1924, this item appeared in the St. Ignace Republican-News.

"The first boat through the Straits went through Wednesday, coal laden and bound up Lake Michigan. She spent Wednesday night lying to at St. Helena, and resumed her journey at daybreak Thursday."

Though it is such a good harbor, there are dangerous shoals about the island, according to the following extract from Bulletin No. 32, before referred to,—“From the light a very shoal bank makes out about a half mile to the south-east, its outer end being marked by a black spar buoy. In approaching from the westward, this end of the island should be given a wide berth. St. Helena Shoal lies west of the north-west end of St. Helena Island, its southerly edge marked by a red and black spar buoy. Do not attempt to round the northwestern end of St. Helena Island at night unless its appearance under Gros Cap and the position of St. Helena Shoal are well understood.”

The greatest marine disaster in the vicinity did not owe its occurrence to these shoals, however, but to the fury of the storm. In 1887 the propeller *California*¹⁷, Captain Trowell, left Chicago Saturday night, October first, bound for Montreal. She was laden with 20,000 bushels of corn and 700 barrels of pork, and also carried three passengers besides a crew of twenty-two persons. She encountered a heavy wind early Monday morning off the Beavers, and at four in the afternoon the sea had increased so that it was impossible to steer her, and three hundred barrels of pork were thrown over, but without helping her much. About eleven o'clock at night, when just above St. Helena Island, the sea broke in the gangways and put the fires out. She then swung around in the trough of the sea and began breaking up. The Captain ordered the boats lowered, but she was so badly listed it was possible to

¹⁷Mills, *Our Inland Seas*, 131. The late Mr. Henry McConnell of Walloon Lake is authority for the date 1887 (*Mich. Hist. Mag.* Vol. XI, p. 154).

lower but one. The Captain went into the cabin to get the passengers out, but when he returned he found that the first mate and several men had taken the boat lowered and left. The steamer now broke up rapidly, and soon all hands were struggling in the water. The captain and engineer succeeded in getting a boat loose from the wreck, and picked up the second engineer, the cook, and one woman passenger. Their boat then drifted alongside the propeller A. Folsom, which was anchored under St. Helena. Another boatload succeeded in getting ashore near Pointe La Barbe. The steamer Faxton picked up one man who was drifting down the Straits on some wreckage. All the bodies of the victims were afterward washed ashore at Cecil Bay and McGulpin's Point."¹⁸

A somewhat similar disaster, but with no loss of life, occurred in September, 1923, when the steambarge Helen Taylor, Captain Lawrence Duman, ran into bad weather when on her way from Epoufette to St. Ignace, with a deckload of thirteen hundred ties aboard. The accident happened just abreast of St. Helena Island. The boat had encountered many more severe storms than this one, but she carried a much larger load this time than she usually took aboard, and was unable to rise with the waves when they swept by her, and she broke in two on the crest of a huge wave and sank. Captain Duman, Engineer Herb Dulya and Mack McCole were aboard, but succeeded in getting their power-yawl free from the wreckage, and reached Gros Cap in safety.

An expedition undertaken to St. Helena Island in October, 1924, was fraught with no such perils. The calm surface of the water was scarcely ruffled and the sun shone as brightly as though storms and darkness were phantoms of the imagination.

The following letter written by one of the participants in this excursion, gives some idea of the appearance of the island at that time:

"Loren Litchard of St. Ignace took the party by auto along the picturesque old portage, now a fine road. He went to nearly every house in Gros Cap to find some way for us to cross to St. Helena Island. One family had gone berrying, several were out taking in nets, some were mending their nets and could not spare the precious time, nor would we have asked them to. Finally we were told

¹⁸*Chebougan Democrat.*

that by waiting till the Goudreaus came in from lifting their nets, we could probably get them to take us over in their power boat. We camped down near the Goudreau dock, ate our lunch and waited. And then we waited some more. Finally we saw a boat coming in and hailed it, but we had to go to another dock farther down toward West Moran Bay, as nearly all the fishermen have been obliged continually to build new docks on account of the lowering of the lakes. After a consultation with his brother, Ben Goudreau agreed to take us over to the island, while the brother went to St. Ignace with the fish they had brought in,—big whitefish, but not too many of them. Ben disappeared for awhile, to return with his cousin, Caroline LaVake, a descendant of that LaVake the trader, mentioned in the treaty of 1836. Manifestly not in good health, she was yet bright and cheerful, and seemed happy at a chance to ride to St. Helena. She and her cousin told us many interesting things about the island. Miss LaVake had read Child of the Sea, and was fully appreciative of the romantic traditions of the locality.

“When about half-way across we met David Corp rowing to Gros Cap. We were sorry to miss talking to him, as you had told us he would know so much about the history of the place. We were greeted at the old pier by an innumerable company of dogs, and our young Gros Cap companions told us that they are regular summer boarders on the island. There are so many owned in Gros Cap by the men who use them to travel over the ice in the winter, that they would be a great nuisance if left at large in the summer, so they are banished to the island, where they may range freely about, but cannot annoy anyone. They proved to be very friendly, and soon Mr. Easton, the official hermit of St. Helena, came down to meet us,—a quiet pleasant old man, very glad to get the newspapers we gave him. The young folks showed us the old cooper shop, a roomy building where dances used to be held even within their recollections, and they told us about the other buildings left around the dock. One very large, important looking wharf, where the steamboats used to land, was almost entirely rotted away, but the one where we had landed was in good repair. All the old houses were surrounded with lilac bushes,—we could but think of Amy Lowell’s poem, and that she would have felt at home here, with these “bits of New England”. They say these old shrubs are a lovely

sight in blossom in the late spring of the north, and we wondered whether they were scions of the giant lilac bushes that encircle the Old Mission House at Mackinac Island.

There were also the remains of an old garden, where giant radish-tops had flourished in wild luxuriance since the last lightkeeper's family left. The lighthouse is closed and the windows shuttered, but the sun control takes charge now, and has been as satisfactory, they say, as a human agent.

The lighthouse boasts no keeper now,
Only the setting sun,
At twilight hour,
With magic power,
Turns the bright beacon on.

As we walked back from the lighthouse, the young girl and I together, the others far ahead, I said to her, "Wouldn't it be restful to spend a winter here?" and she answered, "Oh, I think it would! In the winter, someone is over here almost every day. They come on the ice and go over to set their nets on the other side of the island. But they don't stay long, and anyone could have a lot of time to read and wander around. And it would be so nice and quiet."

On our way back to Gros Cap we again met David Corp, rowing back to his shack on the island. Ben Goudreau said, "He will row over several times a day, just to post a letter, or on some little errand."

We found our landing on the shore at Gros Cap somewhat more difficult than our embarkation, as there was no one to help pull us in. Ben's brother had been there to shove us out when we started. We had to jump quite a way to avoid wetting our feet. With the kindly and anxious forethought for his cousin's illness that had seemed to characterize both boys, Ben Goudreau picked her up and carried her across the shallow water. It was a touch of Gallic politeness worthy of his French ancestors. An Anglo-Saxon might have thought of it afterwards, a descendant of the voyageurs did it almost without thinking."

A sad footnote to this account is that the young girl died early the following spring. She had been working in Detroit and had come home that summer for a rest. Tuberculosis had made such progress, however, that it was impossible to save her.

The memory of her charming personality, and of her untimely fate will ever linger with the members of that little party of excursionists, to be in time added to the stories and traditions that surround the region with human interest and romance.

How much of change and chance has the little island seen. The rendezvous of two expeditions of revenge, it has seen the bark canoes of the Indians, swiftly gliding by, or landing on its pebbly beach; it has seen the day of the canoe pass, and the "Griffon", first in the long line of sailing ships, sweep on to her mysterious doom. It has seen sails give way to steam, and the small, wood-burning steamboats, in their turn supplanted by the big coal-burning cargo boats, dragged as tows in the wake of their successors. It has seen the Indians vanish or merge with the voyageurs and traders, all in time to change into fishermen or lumbermen. It has seen the lumbermen in their glory and in their decline, and, with the fishermen crowded out by big commercial interests, turning to other and less venturesome pursuits.

Through it all, it has remained unspoiled, with just enough of human occupancy to add interest to its story, but not enough to cloud its natural beauty. May it remain for long undesecrated by civilization, so that however far from it we wander we may always think of it there on the bosom of the waters, as lovely as when we last beheld it.

Foreshortened by the distance till modern stern and bow
Are heightened to the semblance of oldtime poop and prow,
Past St. Helena Island the giant freighters go,
Looming like Spanish galleons against the afterglow.
They will return deep-laden with stores of golden grain,
As the ancient ships brought treasure back to the shores of Spain.

A ROMANTIC CHAIN OF ISLANDS

AMONG the learned papers read before one of the earliest meetings of the Michigan Historical Society, when Cass and Schoolcraft were contributing to its success, was one by Henry Whiting, in which he discussed at length the supposed tidal waves of the Great Lakes.

He observes of a "current rushing through the Straits of Mackinaw to Lake Michigan" that "the wave, after traversing the foot of Lake Michigan [is] still somewhat preserved in its artificial elevation, by a chain of islands that run almost the whole breadth of this transit."

But his efforts to bolster up the tidal wave theory are set at naught by the introduction at the end of his paper of letters from both Cass and Schoolcraft, in answer to his inquiries, in which they agree that what has been taken for a tidal wave is probably the effect of the wind.

Concerning the chain of islands mentioned, a series of traditions and tales have arisen which it seems worth while to collect from their various sources and record.

These islands were not of much interest to the earliest explorers and fur-traders. They appear on the maps, variously disposed about the foot of the lake, but variations of location indicate that they were but lightly regarded. To Marquette, who was seeking to convert the Indian tribes beyond the influence of the Mackinac rendezvous, and to explorers like La Salle and Tonty, whose faces were set always toward the Mississippi, their exact location was of little moment.

The chain of islands consists of the Beavers, nine in all, at the north end of the Lake; and the two Manitou Islands, farther up toward the head of the lake, nearer the Chicago end but a long way from it; and lying about midway between these groups, the two Fox Islands, mere dots on the map.

It was to the Beavers (Isles du Castor) that the Chippewas were taking Alexander Henry, after the massacre at Fort Michillimackinac, when he was rescued by the Ottawas at L'Arbre Croche. There were always Indians on the Beavers.

The Fox Islands were too small to hold an Indian family long, who must depend upon the hunting as well as the fishing for their living; and the Manitous, in the early days were held as sacred as was Mackinac Island, and were not used for ordinary purposes.

One of the Indian legends with regard to the Manitous, connecting its origin with that of Sleeping Bear Point, was lately given in verse in this Magazine.¹ The unique and picturesque character of this point and of these islands, can best be appreciated when seen from the deck of a steamer approaching Glen Haven on a clear day. Glen Haven lies on the mainland just around Sleeping Bear Point and opposite the Manitous.

In legends of Michigan and the Old Northwest, by Judge F. G. Littlejohn, there is an account of an Indian battle between the Sauks, Foxes and Chippewas, on the one side, and the Ottawas on the other, in which the first-named tribes sought to surprise their enemy; the Sauks and Foxes by crossing Lake Michigan from Green Bay, making the Manitous a base of supplies, and the point for massing their forces.

"The Manitou Islands were from their sterility and isolated position named after their Great Spirit by the adjacent tribes. They thus came to be regarded with awe, as a sort of earthly tabernacle for the Invisible One. The Ottawas avoided an approach to them on ordinary occasions."

In the story, Wakazoo and Okemos, the Ottawa chieftains, are forewarned by an exiled chief of the Sauks, and execute a counter-plot. Very stirring is the picture of the gathering of the Ottawas from the Grand and Muskegon and Manistee regions, gliding out from the mouths of the rivers and pressing onward in orderly array along the lake shore.

"Not a sound was heard save the measured strokes of many hundred paddles, as the canoes, three abreast, glided in lengthened lines, over the water, running well inshore."

The setting sun sees the combined fleets well within the mouth of the Betsie River. (*Rivière au Becs Scies*, named, as some think, for the saw-billed duck, as was that in the Upper Peninsula, which has also degenerated to Betsy). White Water, the chief of the Elk

¹IX, 473-474.

Rapids and Little Traverse Region, meets them there with a thousand warriors.

The Chippewas, unsuspecting, come down from the North, and the Ottawas surprise and defeat them "near the inner lake" (Glen Lake, possibly) and drive them to the beach before the Sauks and Foxes, two thousand strong, suddenly appear in a fleet of canoes coming out of the channel between the Manitou islands. Warned of the disaster by the signals of the defeated Chippewas, and buffeted by a suddenly risen gale, they try to turn back to the Manitous. Finding this impossible, they manage to land on Sleeping Bear Point. Then around these shores there rages a fierce battle, ending in the total rout of the invading Chippewas and their allies, the Sauks and Foxes, who had hoped to regain their old lands on the Saginaw Bay.

Allowing for pardonable exaggeration, one may suppose the story to be a good account of an old Indian battle. Judge Littlejohn rode the circuit from Allegan to Grand Traverse many times, and had opportunities to learn from the Indians which are rare today. The fact that he liked to introduce into all his narratives certain familiar characters, the scout Lynx-Eye, and the pale-face hunter Dead-Shot, who had married the Ottawa princess Mishawaha, and the probable exaggeration in numbers for which his Indian informants were responsible, detract somewhat from the accuracy of the narration of the main incidents, but this is in a measure off-set by his knowledge of the Indian methods of warfare and his familiarity with the localities described.

Seeing the humdrum lives of the patient descendants of the old Indian warriors no one wonders that they love to dwell on the legends of the days when their ancestors ruled all this land, or that they are prone to exaggerate when telling the tales of oldtime conflicts.

Oh the brave days of our fathers
When they moved in countless numbers
Past the headlands, up the rivers!
When they camped upon the islands
On the Manitous and Foxes
And the far-off isles of Beaver!
When they fought their stormy battles
All along these shores and inlets
In the brave days gone forever!

Now we wear the white man's clothing,
And we try his ways to follow,
But our hearts are beating sadly
To the measures of the past!

The two Manitou Islands lie about six and three-quarters miles northwesterly from the main shore at Sleeping Bear and Pyramid Points. Between the islands and the mainland is Manitou Passage, used by large vessels proceeding to and from the south end of Lake Michigan. The islands are about three and three-quarters miles apart, with deep water between them. South Manitou, the smaller of the two, three and a half miles long north and south by three and three-quarters miles greatest width east and west, is hilly and bluff on the west side and lower and wooded on the east side. All its shores are deep close-in except the southerly, from which shoals extend. South Manitou Harbor, on the east side of the island and semi-circular in shape, is protected from all winds from northeast through west to southwest, and has deep water with good holding ground. South Manitou light is on the southerly point of the harbor. There is a coastguard station on the south side of South Manitou harbor, a quarter of a mile north of the light. The island has telephone connection with Glen Haven on the mainland.

North Manitou island is seven miles in length north by south by about four and a quarter miles in width east and west at the north end, and about two miles at the south end; in general it is hilly and wooded. A lee can be found under North Manitou with generally good holding ground. There are some shoals around the east and the west and southerly shores, the north shore is deep close-to. On the most easterly point of the south shore is North Manitou light. An area of foul ground near the southerly point is marked by a buoy and the North Manitou Shoal light vessel. There is a coastguard station a short distance south of Pickard's wharf (North Manitou P. O.) on the east side of the island toward the northerly end.²

Pickard's wharf takes its name from Nicholas Pickard, who built it in 1854. He came to Manitou Island in 1846, and established a station for the supply of wood to steamers plying between Chicago

²*Lake Survey Bulletin*, No. 32.

and Buffalo. There were then but two or three families on North Manitou, and a wooding station on South Manitou.

There were wooding stations there before Pickard's, for Margaret Fuller, in the summer of 1843, "went on shore at the Manitou Islands, where the boat stops to wood. No one lives here except the woodcutters for the steam boats. I had thought of such a position, from its mixture of profound solitude with service to the great world, as possessing an ideal beauty. I think so still, after seeing the wood cutters and their slovenly huts. On this beautiful beach of smooth white pebbles, interspersed with agates and cornelians, for those who know how to find them, we stepped, not like the Indian with some humble offering which, if no better than an arrowhead or a little parched corn, would, he judged, please the Manitou, who looks only at the spirit in which it is offered. Our visit was so far for a religious purpose that one of our party went to inquire the fate of some Unitarian tracts left among the wood cutters a year or two before. But the old Manitou though, daunted like his children by the approach of the fireships which he probably considered demons of a new dynasty, he had suffered his woods to be felled to feed their pride, had been less patient of [this] encroachment, and had scattered those leaves as carelessly as the others of that year. But S. and I, like other emigrants, went not to give but to get, to rifle the woods for the service of the fireship. We returned with a rich booty, among which was the *uva ursi*, whose leaves the Indians smoke with the kinnickinnick, and which had just then put forth its highly-finished little blossoms, as pretty as those of the blue-berry. We reached Chicago on the evening of the sixth day, having been out five days and a half, a rather longer passage than usual at a favorable season of the year.³

Though Margaret Fuller says that "all the noble trees are gone already from this island", there were a good many left, for Captain McKinnon tells of stopping there in 1851 for wood. He says, "the islands are of extremely curious formation. Densely covered with wood, they are never-the-less composed entirely of sand. I was informed by Captain M'Comb of the United States Topographical Engineers that when employed in surveying this group, he desired

³Margaret Fuller, *A Summer on the Lakes*.

to plant a surveying station on the crest of a sandhill. On attempting to cut down certain bushes for the purpose, he was much astonished to find that they were the tops of some cottonwood trees. From the still living foliage he came to the conclusion that the drifting sand had completely buried them alive; and believed that two years at the utmost was the period of time required to envelop them to the depth of sixty feet."⁴

Pickard was still continuing his business at Manitou island in 1873, though then living in Leland, having gradually weaned himself from the island by living on the mainland winters and spending only the summers there. His brother Simon came to the Manitous with Nicholas. He says that at that time (1846) boats called at the island daily each way, and the little colony increased rapidly. There were then no white people on the mainland near. Mackinac was the nearest village. There was a blacksmith on Manitou island in 1857, Moses H. Dexter, whose daughter Amanda married John Dalton, who had come in 1848. A sawmill was built on the island by Frederick Cook. Many came there in search of health, among others John Lerue from Chicago, and at the time he came, "there was a pier or wharf on each of the two islands, the one on the south island owned by Mr. Barton. On the North Manitou were the Pickards and two fishermen without families. The lighthouse was kept by a man named Clark. No Indians were living on the Manitous." Several Germans came there, C. H. Kahr in 1855, after he had been one year in America, and Andrew Halmend, afterwards captain and owner of the steamship *G. Barber*, came with his parents in 1857. Valentine Lee, later United States Deputy Marshal at Detroit, was there from 1857 to 1859; Captain C. E. Wilbur during the same period.

People who were bound for the mainland were landed at the Manitou islands and afterwards taken to the mainland in small boats. Rev. S. Steele came to Grand Traverse in October, 1859. He says that Northport (once known as Waukazooville) was then the great emporium of the Traverse Region to which all were obliged to make in coming to or departing from the country, unless by fraud or misrepresentation they might be left in exile upon the

⁴McKinnon, *Atlantic and Transatlantic Sketches*, p. 118.

Manitou, when days and even weeks were spent in useless effort to escape from their durance vile.

Rev. Mr. Rorke was appointed to Traverse City from the conference of 1851. "He came a single man and was landed at the Manitou Islands, instead of Northport, they telling him it was but a short distance. He was obliged to pawn his watch for a man to bring him across in a boat, after a storm of several days."

Michael Gay, one of the first settlers of Traverse City, coming there with the Boardmans, sailed the "Lady of the Lakes" over to the Manitou, to bring back his young wife, about sixteen years old, with her four-months-old baby, who had come to join her husband, and who was accompanied by a maid, and by several carpenters who were employees of Boardman. After the carpenters had finished their work at Traverse City, it was arranged that Mr. Boardman would take them in the "Lady of the Lake" to the Manitou, where they could get passage on one of the steamers that were in the habit of touching there. Boardman expected to find supplies there which he could bring back. But he found they had not come, and while waiting for them, the little vessed was caught in a storm, driven upon the beach and totally wrecked. Upon the arrival of the supplies there seemed no way to get them to Traverse City. He was at last obliged to go by steamer to Mackinac, then on foot to his home, more than a hundred miles along the beach. Meanwhile the people at Traverse City, hearing of the wreck through some fishermen, decided that they must somehow reach the Manitou, as navigation would soon be closed and the supplies were sorely needed. Gay went to Old Mission and obtained the little schooner *Arrow*, and the owner, H. K. Cowles, with Robert Campbell and several others, accompanied him to the Manitou, and brought back the needed provisions.⁵

Today it is almost as hard to get to the Manitou as formerly. Arthur W. Stace wrote a series of articles on the Michigan resort country last summer (1926) for the *Grand Rapids Press*. He writes that he was unable to get to the Manitou and Fox islands. There is a mailboat, a small launch, that goes across to Leland from North Manitou when the crossing is not too rough, and the *Puritan* from Chicago sometimes stops there. In the winter the ice forms a link

⁵*Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, XXXII, 53.

in the chain of islands that welds them to each other and to the mainland, but the most modern transportation is that of the airplane, and this is not as yet regularly in service.

North Manitou Island was host to an airplane party last August (1926) when several Muskegon and Chicago people, including Ross W. Judson, President of the Continental Motors Company, flew to the island for the week-end, in the motor magnate's plane.

After the summer visitors' airplanes have left, and before ice has formed, the problem of transportation to the mainland is a serious one for the islanders. The following item shows how serious. "Fighting his way through floating ice and a heavy head-sea, Captain Tracy Grosvenor drove his thirty-foot gasoline boat from North Manitou Island, fourteen miles off this port (Leland) to carry the wife of a coastguardsman to a hospital for an emergency operation. There is no doctor on North Manitou and diagnosis was made by submarine telephone by Dr. Fred Murphy of Cedar. Dr. Murphy was at the dock here when the boat arrived and hurried the patient to Traverse City. Captain Grosvenor returned to the island at once, carrying a ten-day accumulation of mail."⁶

There was a doctor on South Manitou Island in 1864, but while he was most needed he was busy rescuing the passengers from the *J. Y. Scammon*, which had been wrecked off the island. The doctor's name was Alonzo Slyfield, and he had gone to the island for his health, giving up his profession to take the position of keeper of the South Manitou light. He succeeded in rescuing all the passengers, including four women, as they slid down a spar from the overturned boat. As he returned to his house, he learned that he was the father of a nine-pound boy, born while he was engaged in his heroic work. Dr. Slyfield was afterward keeper of Point Betsie light.

There is at present a small settlement on each of the Manitous, and a larger colony in summer on North Manitou. There is one woman farmer there who has quite an apple orchard, and the steamer *Puritan* stops in the late summer to get the apples. A. W. Stace writes that "there has been an attempt at cattle ranching, and there was quite an exciting time last summer when they were trying to catch the cattle that had run wild. Apparently the long winter and

⁶Grand Rapids Press, Dec. 20, 1926.

inability to raise sufficient winter feed is against cattle-ranching. There are small lumbering operations on the island, and one company now has a gravel pit there, shipping the gravel by boat to points along the coast."

An article in the *Detroit News*, Dec. 16, 1917, asserts that the Manitous are inhabited almost exclusively by Danes and Norwegians, but the literal truth of this may be doubted. Certainly the early settlers were of German and Yankee stock. Many of these left the Manitous when the settlements on the mainland became more prosperous, and the steamers, burning coal, no longer needed to stop at the islands for their fuel.

Radio beacons are being established on the Great Lakes, and in 1926 one was added to the equipment of Manitou Island. Ships must be equipped with radio compasses to make use of these beacons.

The coast guardsman's work is an interesting feature of the service of the government to the Great Lakes. July 30, 1895, the schooner *Presto* came to grief near the Manitous. About half-past two in the morning, "the patrolman of the life-saving station saw a signal of distress, which was answered at once by keeper and crew manning a surfboat and pulling out two miles against a heavy sea." They found the schooner leaking rapidly and in danger of foundering at her anchors. "Got her under way and sailed her to an anchorage under a lee. Landed a woman and three children from the schooner, all sick and needing attention, and gave them clothing and medicine. Manned the vessel's pumps and assisted in keeping her afloat during the night. At daylight searched for and found the leak and helped to stop it. Worked on the leaking seams for two days and sheltered the woman and children at the station during that time. On the afternoon of the thirty-first, they were put on board the schooner, now made seaworthy by the efforts of the life-saving crew, and she proceeded to her destination."⁷ From the above one may glean that a life saver has many duties; and indeed they are expected to assist in any way where there is need, furnishing clothing and food, recovering bodies, rescuing even animals, and assisting in putting out fires on land as well as sea.

The Manitou Passage widens out toward the north end, and the Fox Islands are farther from the mainland than the Manitous. It

⁷Extract from *Annual Report of Life Saving Service*, 1896, p. 68.

was along these shores and through this passage, uncharted then save by the unerring woodcraft of the Indian, that the Potawatomi chief, Alexander Robinson, and his wife paddled the canoe in which they took Captain and Mrs. Heald to Mackinac, to escape their captors after the massacre at Chicago, deeming it safer to turn them over to the British at the fort, than to try to conceal them at St. Joseph.⁸

And between these same islands and the mainland Gurdon Hubbard, a mere boy of seventeen, rowed along to take up his lonely station inland on Muskegon River. "With but three men to row the boat, and buffeted by storms and adverse winds, winter found them still coasting the lake", though they had left Mackinac the last of October. "Thus with a heavily laden canoe . . . often in great peril, sometimes shipping water and narrowly escaping wreck, suffering from cold and worn with toil, they entered the Muskegon River about the tenth of December. . . ."⁹

South Fox Island is seventeen miles north-north-east from North Manitou Island, and eighteen miles northwest of Lighthouse Point, at the northwest entrance to Grand Traverse Bay. The holding ground around the Foxes is very good, and they afford shelter from all winds except from the northwest and southeast.¹⁰

When an unusually large fleet of freighters go through the Straits after a "spell of rough weather", the old sailors along the shore will murmur, "They've been a-laying-to behind the Foxes till this blew over."

North Fox Island is wooded, is two miles long north and south, and one mile in width at its north end, tapering to a point at the south end, which is hilly. It can be approached to within a quarter of a mile on its north and east sides, but on its west side near the south end is shallow water.

South Fox Island, the larger of the two, is five miles long by about a mile and a half greatest width. It is about four miles southwest of North Fox. It is hilly on the westerly side, but lower and wooded on the east side. The South Fox light is on the south point of the island.

⁸Kinzie, *Waubun*, ed. 1901, p. 191.

⁹Biographical Sketch, Hamilton, p. 241.

¹⁰*Lake Survey Bulletin*, No. 32.

The manuscript record of a life full of incident, written to "fulfill a promise made many years ago to my little Lee" (Leland G. Langdon) by his mother, Melissa Rice Langdon, gives some experiences on the South Fox Island that are of interest as a picture of life in those early days (about 1846). Mrs. Langdon's narrative is written in the third person, and in story form, but is a record of personal experiences, and the names are none of them fictional. She was born in Fort Wayne, Indiana, in 1841, and soon after her birth, the family moved to Prairie Ronde, Wisconsin, making the journey in a "covered wagon". Her account of the hardships there endured is graphic. Finally her mother succumbed to a fever, and the distracted father was left with five little girls to care for, the youngest a mere baby. Leaving them with relatives, he went to Mackinac Island, where he had a brother, James Rice, a prosperous merchant. As soon as he had made a home for them there, Samuel Rice, their father, returned to get the children. They were delighted with the island, and the older girls went to school there during the winter.

"It was decided that they should spend the summer at Big Fox Island." They hurried to get ready to go in the *Twin Brothers*. "Bright and early in the morning they were all up and dressed and ready for breakfast, after which they were soon ready to start on their trip . . . the little ones were very happy. They bid their aunt and uncle and friends goodbye and went on board the great boat. She was a fine vessel, painted white and was called "*Twin Brothers*." Their fishing boat was called the *Sea Gull*.

"They were not long in running to Big Fox Island; then the girls were put into their pretty white boat and their father rowed them ashore, and as they got out on the beautiful white sand, they wondered what kind of a house they were going to live in. In a few minutes their father led the way up a hill, until they came to a house where they were warmly welcomed by a good-natured woman." With this woman, Mrs. Snell, they stayed until their own house was ready.

One of their first adventures was when Lissie (the author of the manuscript) and her older sister Martha attempted to row in the *Sea Gull* over to the smaller island. They lost oars and rudder, and were only saved by being swept back by the wind, over the bar and into the harbor, where their father threw them a rope. He

did not scold them, as they had had such a fright, but made them promise never to take the boat again without permission.

They kept house for their father and the hired man, whose duty it was to clean and salt the fish which would be called for from time to time by the larger boat. All went well, till the children were one after another taken ill with fever. The father feared it was smallpox, as there had been some cases on Mackinac Island. But after a few days, Mrs. Snell was able to pronounce it measles, and they soon recovered. Naturally, their father was much relieved, as a siege of smallpox in that lonely place, and with those little children, would have been an awful experience.

"The summer was nearly over and one morning they all went over to get a good view of Little Fox Island. They sailed over, and when they reached the shore, they gathered many pretty relics to take back with them." It did not take long to go around the island, and soon they were back in their little home again.

They had been there three months, when they went back to Mackinac. They did not return to Fox Island the next summer, and two years from that time they were fishing off Beaver Island. . . .

Later a few families came from the Mormon community on Beaver Island and lived all the year round on the Fox and Manitou Islands. It is likely that it was on one of these islands that the Martins landed after being cast adrift in their boat without oars by the Mormons, instead of Gull Island or on St. Helena Island, as is variously stated in different accounts of their adventure.¹¹

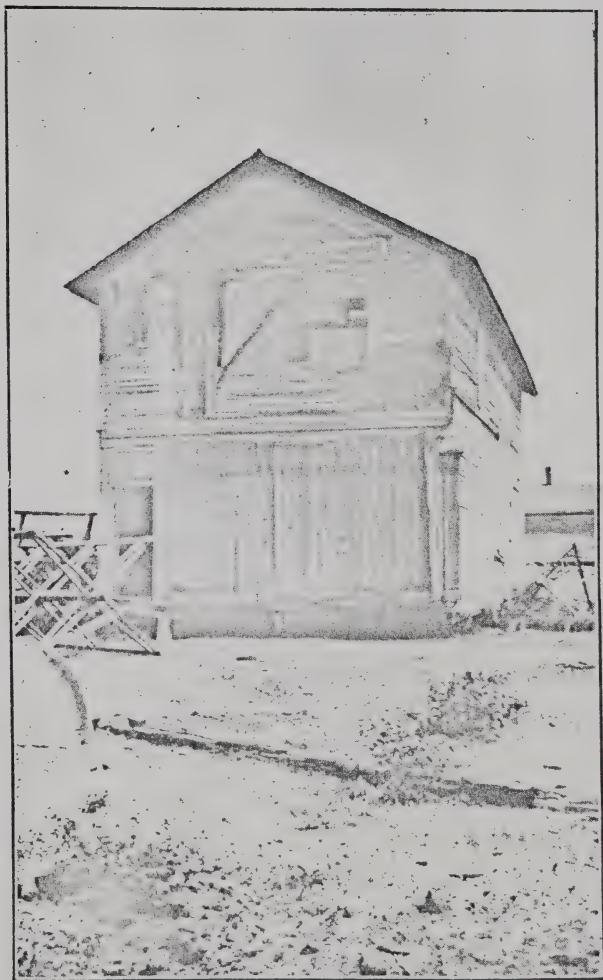
James Jesse Strang, the head of the Mormon Church on Beaver Island, in his *Ancient and Modern Michilimackinac*, published in 1854, states that on the Fox Islands was quite a settlement, "an equal number of Mormons and Gentiles". He says it was there that the propeller "Illinois" was wrecked, in 1851, and that the disposal of the cargo caused a controversy with the Mormons. Even as he tells it, one can see how this matter must have helped to crystalize sentiment against the Mormons. But very little reliance can be placed on Strang's pamphlet, though it has been widely quoted, and is probably the basis for the belief of many that the early fishermen were a reckless, drunken gang of outlaws. Narratives like the

¹¹*Biographical History of Northern Michigan*, (B. F. Bowen & Co.), p. 622; see also *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*; Waldron, *We Explore the Great Lakes*.

unpublished one of Mrs. Langdon's, and the book, *A Child of the Sea*, by Elizabeth Whitney Williams, in their naive sketches of everyday life of the fishing stations; as well as the biographical sketches of the early settlers of the region, establish the fact that most of the fishermen were respectable, hard-working men, who took their wives and children with them to the fishing stations in summer, and lived winters on Mackinac Island, where their children could go to school. Some of those who came from Ohio, Indiana, Wisconsin and New York owned farms in those places which they also attended to, spending but a few weeks on the fishing stations, boarding with the more permanent residents. Others from these states brought their families with them and stayed all summer, neighbors and friends of the Mackinac Island people, who often sent their children back to stay with these families for a winter of schooling, or to learn some useful trade. Before the Mormons came, many of these people had settled on Beaver Island. Names like Snell, Rice, McKinley, Cable, Whitney, Davenport, Newton, Wright and Crane are sufficient indication of the stock from which they came. Their descendants of today, bright, up-to-date men and women, well-educated and well-read, sensible, frugal and God-fearing, are sufficient testimony that the stock has not run out.

Among the Mormons were many of the same ilk, and it may be noted that there were the followers of Strang who mingled with their Gentile neighbors until terrorized by Strang's edicts, and who afterward became lukewarm or apostate to his doctrines. Among these were the families who, having no personal quarrels with the fishermen, dared to remain on the Beavers or to remove to Charlevoix and Traverse City after the death of Strang. Some Mormon families who had lived on the Fox and Manitou Islands were among these.

In 1923, the interest of the whole country centered on the Fox Islands. Big headlines in the newspapers of April 19th announced "Starvation Faces Ten Marooned by Michigan Ice Floes"! On April 18th, three men had crossed the broken ice and open water from South Fox Island to the mainland; their boat had been crushed by the ice, and they were obliged to make the latter part of the journey by jumping from one floe to another. They reported that nine men and one woman were on the island, in danger of starvation. They



Fish House on Beaver Island

had had nothing to eat for several weeks but frozen potatoes. They had gone on the island in November to cut timber, with enough provisions, they thought, to last them, but owing to the prolonged winter, their supplies ran out.

G. M. Dane telephoned from Northport, and appealed to the Grand Rapids Herald to get an airplane from Selfridge Field to go to their rescue with food. The evening papers told of the flight of an airplane from Selfridge Field, with Lieutenant Ennis C. Whitehead at the helm. He was to stop at Northport, to get food to take to the islanders. Meanwhile, an Ann Arbor Railway car ferry was trying to reach the island but there was little hope expressed that it would succeed in penetrating the ice congestion of northern Lake Michigan, said to be the worst in forty years.

The airplane was disabled, crashing through the ice of Grand Traverse Bay as it tried to land near Northport to take on the supplies. Neither the lieutenant nor a Detroit newspaper man who accompanied him were injured, though both were ducked in the freezing waters. Word came that another plane would be sent out from Selfridge Field. As soon as news of the disaster to the first army plane reached Chicago, a big French Briquet plane owned by Frank J. Parker, was fitted out by Thomas E. Wilson, and started for the island. It was loaded with food and piloted by John Miller, a former navy aviator. This landed at Manchester, Michigan, at night, to resume flight the next morning. By the twentieth, it was reported that three planes had started from Chicago. Another army plane, a giant deHaviland, broke its landing gear in attempting to land near Northport, and was put out of commission, its pilot, Lieutenant Russell Meredith, with "a newspaper man", escaping injury.

Then came rumors that the whole affair was a hoax, and that the people on the island were not starving; then, stories that it was a mutiny, and that the three men had left because they were dissatisfied, that they had plenty of food but no tobacco, and so on. And the dispatches were also to the effect that the three planes from Chicago, "one government mailplane and another army plane", as well as the Wilson-Parker plane, were believed to be lost, as nothing had been heard of them.

At half past ten in the evening of the 22nd, the Ann Arbor Railway car ferry arrived in Frankfort with the refugees. The stories of starvation were confirmed. The woman cook, wife of Edwin Morrow, one of the "lumber-jacks", was the heroine of the adventure. It was she who had insisted on conservation, and who had known how to make the frozen potatoes eatable. The Wilson-Parker plane from Chicago had reached them, with two hundred pounds of food, and had found four of the men ill. After giving what assistance they could, they had attempted to leave the island for further help, and had wrecked their plane and narrowly escaped with their lives. They returned on the ferry.¹²

The three men who carried the news to Northport were Edward Horne, Carl Cooper and Ellis Sayres. The party brought away by the car ferry were Jules Ramsay, Jack Garvey, Robert Husted, Louis Beaudette, Howard Smith, Albert Clark, Nels Ask, and the Morrows. Homer Smith was seriously ill with appendicitis. The ferry had had a hard twenty-one hour battle with the ice and fog, but had won out. Thus fortunately ended an exciting episode filled with danger in many forms.

There had been many wrecks near the Manitous and Foxes. None better known than two that exist only in fiction, the wreck of the *Miwaka*, and the wreck of "Car Ferry No. 25", as told in that fascinating romance by Edwin Balmer and William McHarg, *The Indian Drum*. The description of the scenes on the car ferry when the cars broke loose in the storm won the approval of no less an authority than the late Captain Robertson of the *Wawatam*, who had had wide experience with car ferries. The local color and the Indian characterizations are perfect, while as for interest, any one who can lay the book down unread after once commencing it is yet to be found.

May good fortune direct that some equally delightful tale shall some day be woven around the incident which employed boats, men, ice, car ferry and airplanes, and lacked not even a heroine.

Across "La Grande Traverse" (the wide crossing) of Green Bay in Wisconsin extends another chain of islands linked to the Beavers and Foxes and Manitous by like traditions and history. Across the grand traverse of the bay on the Michigan shore, the way is clear,

¹²Detroit News, Feb. 6, 1927.

but nestled down in the western arm of Grand Traverse Bay, near Bower's Harbor, is a small island that has always been mentioned in connection with those of Lake Michigan. It is as if it were a tiny link dropped from the chain into the bay; or as though there had been three Little Foxes, and the smallest one had run away from his brothers and hid from sight around the Leelanau Peninsula. Strang, who seemed to be covetous of every one of these bits of land, says of it,¹³ "There is a beautiful island, large enough for settlement, near the peninsula of Grand Traverse."

It is indeed a beautiful island rising high above the water, but though "large enough for settlement", it has never known the homesteads of settlers or the axe of the lumberman, and is still covered with a fine growth of the original hardwood timber. It is about one mile long and half as wide, and contains nearly two hundred acres. Its claim to fame was recently stated in a newspaper title to a picture of it, "The special point of interest concerning this picturesque bit of nature is that it is the possession of Henry Ford."

June 5, 1926, one of the original owners of this island, Archibald Buttars, died at San Diego, California,¹⁴ at the age of eighty-eight. He was originally interested in pine lands, and was afterward prominent in political and banking circles in the Grand Traverse Region. He and George Benton laid claim to the island, then known as Island No. 10, in the early fifties.¹⁵

A letter from W. P. Crotser, a prominent attorney of Traverse City, states that a part, apparently about one-third, of Marion Island was patented April 15, 1864, to Archibald Buttars, and patent of the rest of the island issued on June 5, 1866, to Daniel C. Benton. Buttars on July 15, 1864, and Benton on August 16, 1862, conveyed this island to Albert Bacon. He dying, it went to Walter Bacon. From him it was conveyed to William Thomas, July 30, 1872, and he, on December 5, 1872, conveyed it to Frederick Hall.

It was Frederick Hall of Ionia¹⁶ who named it Marion Island for his only daughter. He was of the same fibre as were the early owners, Buttars and Benton and Bacon; a Vermonter, he came to Michigan in the early forties and worked at anything he could find,

¹³*Michilimackinac*, p. 47.

¹⁴*Michigan History Magazine*, XI, 163.

¹⁵Wait and Anderson, *Old Settlers of the Grand Traverse Region*, p. 58.

¹⁶*Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, VI.

graduating from woodcutting to surveying, and becoming afterward politically prominent and very wealthy. Always benevolent and kindhearted, he bequeathed these attributes to his daughter, along with Marion Island.

In *Along Grand Traverse Shores*, by M. E. C. Bates and M. K. Buck, "M.K.B." says of Marion Island, "Years ago, because of the many hogs left there by the Indians during the summer to be fattened on mast, it was called Hog Island, but I am glad to say that this was never anything but a nickname. Close beside it on the east is a tiny islet of not more than two or three acres extent still (1891) belonging to the government and at present appropriated by the famous Dick Basset, an eccentric fisherman who lives there entirely alone, except when he goes away for a few weeks' fishing elsewhere."

There was for a long while a pavilion on Basset's Island and the young people from Traverse City used to go there for picnics and dances.

For as long as could be remembered, two old eagles had lived on Marion Island. They used to prey on the wild ducks that frequented the mouth of the Boardman River. One was shot there a few years ago, and the other never afterward appeared.

Frederick Hall, though an extensive dealer in pine lands, never offered Marion Island for sale, and sentiment held it in the one family for over forty years. His daughter was finally induced to relinquish it, with the thought that in selling it to Henry Ford, it would be preserved in all its original beauty, and not exploited as a resort or stripped of its timber.

It is becoming generally known as "Ford Island", and its old name may some day be lost, but to Ionians it will be remembered as having been called for the donor of one of their public buildings, the Hall-Fowler Memorial Library, given in honor of her father and of her husband, by Marion Hall Fowler. In the memories of a few old residents is the picture of the parlor of the hospitable Hall mansion, now the Library, where three charming girls at the time of the Civil War were entertaining a young lieutenant, home recuperating from the illness caused by the loss of his arm at the battle of Mission Ridge. To amuse him, they each agreed to write to one of his absent comrades. The acquaintances thus begun were the origin



Old Mormon log house and new Beaver Island home.
Picture taken by Agnes Van Buren, Grand Rapids, Mich.

of three romantic marriages, and each marriage a happy one. One of these girls was the daughter of the owner of Marion Island, and she followed her soldier husband faithfully through his career in the regular army, among the barren posts and dangerous Indian campaigns of the West with all the hardships entailed by that life, although she was the petted child of wealthy parents who would have given her every luxury. And finally, after many strenuous years, when advance in rank and better conditions might have promised ease, the brave and gallant officer was stricken and died while returning from Cuba during the Spanish-American War.

In *Along Grand Traverse Shores* is given in dialect a legend of Squaw Island, near Marion Island. "Very bad squaw taken to island and burned by medicine man; since then she walks there at twilight and midnight, headless"! In *The Traverse Region*, this same legend is given in verse written by M. E. C. Bates.

Lately an Indian legend has been assigned to Marion Island. It tells of an Indian chief, Kensotis, exiled by his conquerors to the island. His beautiful daughter, Meahnonta, was held as a hostage, but she escaped and swam from Neahtawanta Point to her father on the island. Seen and loved by Wasebic, son of the chief of her father's foes, he joined them on the island and when his father and a band of adherents tried to recapture him, the entire bluff on the south side was dislodged in their struggles and fell into the water, drowning every one of the attacking party. The three lucky survivors were left to spend their lives on the island in peace.¹⁷

John C. Wright, the well known author of Northern Michigan verse and story, says that there is no such Indian legend as that of the Indian drum. The legends of the Indians were so many, and the tribes traveled so far, and changed so with the various conquests, that it would be rather hard to say that any legend might not be associated with any spot, or that the same one might not be told of many localities. The Kensotis-Meahnonta-Wasebic legend will add an interest to Henry Ford's island as the years go on, and is worth preserving for its poetic value. There is no way of proving or disproving its truth (?) any more than there is of the legend of the Indian drum.

¹⁷Traverse City Record-Eagle, Aug. 3, 1926.

OWNERS OF MARION ISLAND

They were woodsmen and pioneers,
Were Buttars and Benton and Bacon and Hall,
Who held that isle in the early years,—
Buttars and Benton and Bacon and Hall.

They met the forest, and conquered it,
Did Buttars and Benton and Bacon and Hall,
With homespun genius and Yankee grit,—
Buttars and Benton and Bacon and Hall.

And they kept the island inviolate,
In all the joys of its primitive state.

Another kind of a pioneer
Than Buttars and Benton and Bacon and Hall,
Now owns the island they once held dear,—
Buttars and Benton and Bacon and Hall.

He has met his problem, and conquered it
With homespun genius and old-time grit;
And Buttars, and Benton, and Bacon, and Hall
Will approve—that is, if they care at all.

In the chain of islands, the Beaver Islands (Amickopendad, place of the Beavers) are the largest and most important group. No briefer or better description of them could be found than that in the prologue of Harold Titus' delightful novel of the north country, "The Beloved Pawn", interwoven with the more modern life of the islands.

"The Beaver Islands lie crouched in the vigorous blue of Lake Michigan not far from where this inland sea surrenders its flow to the Straits of Mackinac. There are nine in all, ranging from Beaver Island itself which is a dozen miles long by half as many at its greatest width down to a boulder hummock showing above the shoals and designated on the charts as Hat Island. To the westward of Beaver lies High Island, and beyond it little Gull. North and easterly Trout, Whiskey and Squaw Islands punctuate an eight-mile line from High, which brings Squaw to the northward of the entire group. On the other flank,—aside from tiny Hat—lies Hog Island in its big area of bright, shallow water and in the center of the group, the very heart of this archipelago, rests Garden Island with its green forests, its safe harbor, its isolated people."

The northern part of Garden Island is now a State Forest Reserve; and this is well, for by this means may be held for coming generations some example of what the islands were at their loveliest in the olden time. This island was for many years the especial haunt of

the Indians, and it is said that they still transport their dead across the many miles of water to insure them the quiet rest of the island burial ground, where are built the quaint grave-houses which shelter the remains of their departed friends.

About the island cling many traditions of old battles as well as legends of later adventures. Elizabeth Whitney Williams and her first husband, Clement Van Riper, who afterward lost his life in a heroic attempt at rescue when he was lighthouse keeper on Beaver Island,¹⁸ were on Garden Island in 1863-4. She says, "my husband was appointed a government school teacher to the Indians at Garden Island. The school was a large one as there was a large band of Indians. Our school continued for two years, then was discontinued for several years before another teacher was sent among them. That two years was a busy life for us both We were expected to teach them how to plant and cultivate their gardens and farms. They learned rapidly to plant corn and vegetables, but the flower seeds they could not manage. Chief Peain was a very social, intelligent man. He watched the process of making the flower beds and putting in of the small seeds. Then he said, 'Too much work for Indian.' He then took many of the boys and girls, with some of the older ones to help, cleared off three or four acres of land, and put a brush fence around it. They then took the flower seeds of the different kinds, sowing them like grain, and raked them in. Well, such a flower garden was never seen! There was every flower in the catalogue growing up together, and never were flowers enjoyed as those Indians enjoyed that flower garden. Every day at all hours could be seen both old and young going out to look at the flowers. Old grandmothers with the little grandchildren would sit in the shade near the flowers and work beads on the deerskin moccasins while the children played. As soon as school was over the race began for the flower garden. It was called 'the Chief's Garden'. He was greatly pleased with the bright flowers, and had us write a letter of thanks to the Indian agent for him."¹⁹

An account of the modern schools of the island is found in the *Grand Rapids Herald* for July 2, 1922, by Edward E. Webb, and there is another account in the same paper, April 29, 1923. Accord-

¹⁸*Biographical History of Northern Michigan* (B. F. Bowen & Co.), p. 600.

¹⁹Williams, *A Child of the Sea*, p. 211.

ing to these the school often suffers for want of a teacher, as the surroundings and the isolation are unattractive to many who might otherwise apply. In both the above mentioned articles are particulars about Mads Jensen and wife, the only white residents on the island who have seemed at all permanent. They had been there for forty years.

Ever since Strang's reign, it has been the custom of the islanders to refer jokingly to any man of prominence on any of the islands as "King". It seems peculiar that another sect, whose spiritual head has been acclaimed as a king, should actually have settled on one of this group of islands. In August, 1912, High Island was purchased by a religious organization of Benton Harbor, Michigan, known as the House of David, and has been held by them ever since. An industrious colony of its adherents, who are sometimes styled Israelites and sometimes Holy Rollers, are located on the island; a larger colony in summer usually, for then they garden as well as run a sawmill. In winter they cut timber. Their leader, called by the Beaver Islanders, "King Benjamin", was said to have formerly been a frequent visitor to the island colony. For a long while he was in hiding from officers of the law, and until his recent apprehension, it was rumored that he might be concealed on the island.

Arthur W. Stace visited it in the summer of 1926, and gives some particulars of its present state. "The little school on High Island is attended by Indian and House of David children. It is taught by an Irish-American girl from Beaver Island. A white church steeple guides the way to the settlement. This church is a Catholic Indian Mission attended by a Franciscan missionary priest from Harbor Springs. A dock juts out into the lake, behind it is a sawmill. A large rambling boarding house has several dozen one-story cabins scattered about it. The cabins are mostly frame structures with shingled sides. All the men from patriarch to boy in his teens wear the typical House of David cap, baggy because it must contain a lifetime growth of hair. One of the tenets of the House of David is to go unshaved and unshorn. Within the little cabin yards, each closed in with a high fence of poles, are splashes of summer beauty—blooming flowers. The timber has been fairly well cleared away from the island so the sawmill is not run-

ning regularly; the main occupation now is farming. Their belief is that they are a chosen people who will live when all others have perished."²⁰

One of the women members of the colony, convinced that the religion was not for her, escaped from the island by strategy, recalling some of the escapes from Beaver Island, as told in the reminiscences of the Mormon days. She is now living on the mainland with a sister.

At one time the island was offered for sale by the organization, the loss of the schooner "Rosabelle" having discouraged them in their efforts to improve it. The *Rising Sun*, their first vessel, had been wrecked in 1918, but without loss of life. The wreck of the "Rosabelle" was attended with more tragic circumstances. Setting out from High Island in the last week of October, 1921, laden with lumber, the hull of the *Rosabelle* was discovered a week later by a Grand Trunk car ferry, floating bottom up with her sails and rigging dragging alongside. The stern of the ship was gone, indicating a collision. Lumber and wreckage were afterward washed ashore at Muskegon, but no bodies were recovered. The Milwaukee Life Saving Station towed the hull to Racine, Wisconsin, and a thorough investigation was made, but nothing definite determined, and the wreck remained a mystery of the Lakes. There were ten men aboard, besides the Captain Erhart Glicce. It was for a time hoped that they had had time to transfer to their launch, but no word ever came from any of them, so such a hope was abandoned.

BALLAD OF THE LOSS OF THE ROSABELLE

O men that sail the Inland Seas
Wherever you may be
List while I tell a woeful tale
As it was told to me.
And listen all ye landmen, too,
That you may this recall
Ere venturing upon a Lake
Where such-like things befall.

'Twas in the late October days
When bitter winds do blow,
And fog and mist and sudden storms
Those Inland Seas well know,

²⁰Grand Rapids Press, Aug. 19, 1926.

The schooner *Rosabelle* set sail
With lumber loaded down,
Our from High Island's lonely dock
For Benton Harbor town.

Patient but sad that colony
Awaits their going forth—
They will not see their friends again
Till spring comes to the North.

The long-haired captain and his crew
Wave to them in farewell,
And bearded boys lean o'er the rail,
A last goodbye to tell.

Three Beaver Island fishermen
Halloo as they hurry past,
"You Holy-Rollers sure will roll,
The wind is rising fast."

One muttters, "I'd not choose this night,
But Gleise knows his way,
And if King Ben has sent for them
They darsent say him nay."

Now Mount Moriah's lofty peak
That crowns that lonesome isle
Is lost to sight; past Beaver lights
They travel mile on mile.

A misting rain begins to fall
As night comes on apace;
Full soon they'll reach the dang'rous lane
Where the giant freighters race.

Straight up that path, along that way,
With varying speed is hurled
Tonnage from out an inland port
That challenges the world.

And when the season's end is near
They cannot go too fast,
For fear of snow and closing ice
Each trip may be the last.

But the *Rosabelle* goes bravely on
Amid the blinding storm,
Till, suddenly, from out the murk,
There looms a giant form.

She does not see the *Rosabelle*,
Nor hear that woeful cry,
And she cuts away the schooner's stern
As she goes hurrying by.

The *Rosabelle* is filling fast
Beneath the water's weight,
Too clearly does the Captain see
What soon will be her fate.

In vain he bids his bearded boys
To launch the old life-boat,
The boat is gone, and not for long
Can the schooner keep afloat.

"We yet may reach the Manitous",
The gallant Captain cries,
But the sudden listing of the ship
His hopeful word belies.

Clean over goes the *Rosabelle*—
A woeful wreck is she,
And Captain, passengers and crew
Are swept into the sea.

A week passed ere a ferry boat
Out in the Lake, espied
The foundered hull of the *Rosabelle*,
Her rigging dragged 'longside.

Long will the Benton Harbor folk
Look to the westward way,
Never again will the *Rosabelle*
Come sailing into the bay.

And long may the islanders look out
From lone High Island pier,
They shall not see their friends again
Though they wait for many a year.

Not even one floating form was found
Of all that goodly band;
Nor ever trace of one of them
Was washed upon the strand.

Devoted band and trusting hearts
Dupes of a prophet's schemes,
Beneath the stormy waves they lie—
The victims of their dreams.

Besides the autobiographical story, *A Child of the Sea*, there have been many articles and stories written dealing with the Mormon occupation of Beaver Island. James Oliver Curwood wrote a novel, *The Courage of Captain Plum*, which uses the incidents of this period to advantage. Another even more exciting novel, *Strang's Men*, was written long ago by H. Bedford Jones, who is now engaged in writing historical romances of Southern France with such success that one of them is to be translated into the French language for *Le Temps*.

Mary Hartwell Catherwood, in *Mackinac and Lake Stories*, has two wonderfully realistic tales of the Mormon regime, gilding it with the gold of her genius. John C. Wright has printed in his

Lays of the Lake, a tragedy, "King Strang of Beaver Island," and Ivan Swift a dialect poem, "The Assassination of the King," in his *Fagots of Cedar*. "The Convert Goes North," by Valgard Dengir, gives a good picture of Strang and his political dealings. Edwin Balmer in "Resurrection Rock," treats the incidents from a point of view more sympathetic to the Mormons.

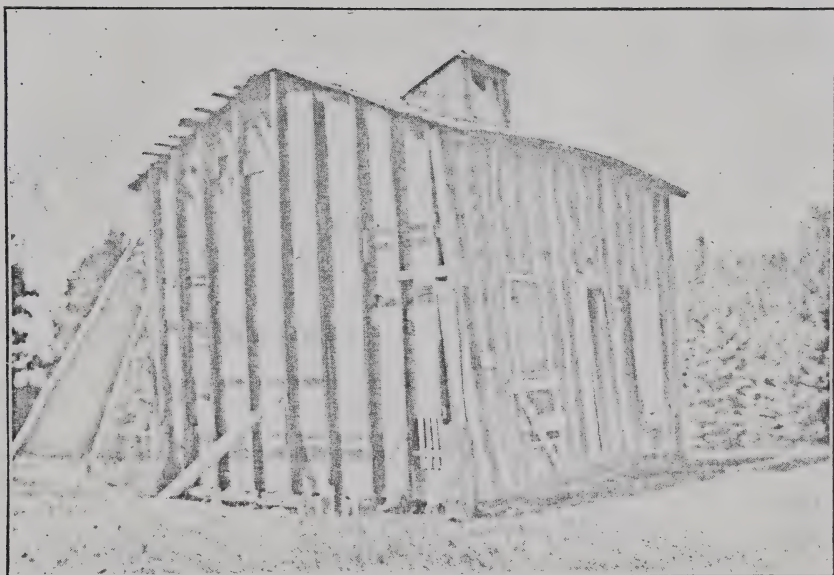
A long and curious historical romance, *The Mormon of the Little Manitou Islands*, by "The Knight of Chillan," published in England and the United States in 1916, connects the death of Strang with the Manitou Islands.

Melissa Rice Langdon, in the manuscript once before quoted, tells of some experiences on Beaver Island in 1848 that may be of interest. This was the second summer after her stay on South Fox Island. The account has been somewhat condensed for use here.

As they were going through the straits from Mackinac to Beaver, Mary, the oldest sister, told Lissie of her fear of the Mormons. But Lissie thinks the Mormons can't hurt the little girls, "if Father is there." When they landed at Lighthouse Point at the south end of the island, Mr. Rice was glad to find his brother from Wisconsin, already there with his wife and baby, and with them they all stayed until their own log-house, but a few feet away, was finished. One day they went to the lighthouse to see the keeper, Henry Van Allen and his wife, and remained to supper. Shortly after they reached home, they heard a knock on the door. Opening it, they found there Samuel Bennett, his bloody hand in a sling. His brother had been killed by the Mormons. He had been wounded and had come to them for protection. The French hired man watched through the night, lest the Mormons follow him. But they did not come, and in the morning Bennett was put on board the *Twin Brothers* and taken to Mackinac Island.²¹ This was the first overt act of the Mormons.

The Rices feared reprisal, and it was arranged that in the event of danger, they would take the little girls to the lighthouse for protection. There follows the description of a storm on the lake, when their father and their uncle are nearly lost in saving the nets. As the summer wanes, Lissie is tempted to go home on the steamer

²¹*Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, Vol. 32; see also Williams' *A Child of the Sea*, p. 94; McKinnon, *Atlantic and Transatlantic Sketches*, p. 121.



Mormon house near southern end of Beaver Island, now partially dismantled. The lookout window commanded a first view of ships coming from the south end of Lake Michigan toward St. James and Beaver Harbor. Also looked over Lake Genasareth.

Photo by Mr. Ralph Windoes of Grand Rapids, July, 1926.

Michigan and stay for the winter at her Uncle Hiram's in Wisconsin, but repenting as soon as she is out of sight of her own home, she tells Mrs. Cable, at the harbor, while the party are waiting for the boat, of the change in her feelings, and her father comes for her.

One day soon after this, Mr. Rice and his man became alarmed by the prowlings of the Mormons and Strang about their place. They seemed to be looking over a quantity of fish stored in the fish-shanty. Owing to stormy weather, the *Twin Brothers* had not been there for two weeks to collect them, and there was an unusually large store on hand.

It is here the chronicle ends with the words, "Composed by Mama for Leland on his sixteenth birthday," and the promise "To be continued." The proposed continuation was never written, but in a short biography added to the narrative, Mrs. Langdon says, "My father went to Beaver Island in 1848. We spent the summer there near Lighthouse Point, barely escaping with our lives, then my father moved to Northport where we had some experiences with Indians. Father then moved to Traverse City, where my story may continue."

It was at Traverse City that she attended school with Elizabeth Whitney (Williams), and laid the foundation of a lifelong friendship. The teacher of the school was Helen Goodale (Hitchcock), at that time sixteen years old, and teaching her second year.²²

Until the expulsion of the Mormons, the Beaver Islands remained closed to the fishermen from the other communities, and it was some time after before the old happy communication with the mainland was resumed. But it gradually came to be that Beaver Harbor (St. James) was almost as important a port as Mackinac, and in the sixties people from Charlevoix used to cross in small sailboats to do their trading there. There were several Irish families that came after the Mormons left, and more soon followed. In time the French people seem to have returned to Green Bay and St. Ignace and Mackinac, and most of those from the states below moved over onto the mainland of Michigan. At one time there was only one family on the island not of the Catholic faith, and very few not of Irish descent. There are at present about seven hundred people on the island.

²²Wait and Anderson, *Old Settlers of Grand Traverse Region*, pp. 36-37.

Ten or fifteen years ago many of the islanders spent their winters on the mainland, now the more prosperous go to Florida, California and way points. Those who remain at home have the consolations of modern agencies like the phonograph and the radio to distract (!) them.

The isolation of the islands in the long winters seems more disturbing to people in other communities than to those accustomed to them. In a letter to Mrs. John C. Loucks of Grand Rapids, the grand-daughter of Melissa Rice Langdon, written February 28, 1922, Mrs. Elizabeth Whitney Williams, says,

"I have told you about the big storm, and our being without trains and mail for just a week today (Charlevoix), but that was often the case when I lived on the island in years gone by. One or two winters we had no mail there for three months, but we were just as happy there as anyone could be, we had little outside business on our minds, so we did not care so much for mails then, we had all we needed and made ourselves happy and contented."

April 7, 1926, however, she was proud to write, "The mail was carried to Beaver Island this week by airplane for the first time, as the ice was not safe for crossing, so this may be the beginning of the airplane crossing over every winter after this."

Well may she reflect, "Sometimes when I look back and try to realize what has been crowded into my life since my very earliest recollections, it seems almost an impossibility" "but in the pioneer days people nearly all had many wonderful experiences but took everything as a matter of course."

This isolation sometimes closes in on visitors to the islands, and they do not bear it so philosophically as the natives. John A. Topolinski of Grand Rapids was left on Beaver Island in the fall of 1921, while looking over timber lands. The freeze-up came sooner than he expected, and he was forced to choose between walking thirty-six miles over the ice to Cross Village or spending the winter at St. James. Not being used to ice crossings, he chose the latter. During the three months he spent on the island, there were five mail deliveries. The island is usually without mail from the close of navigation until the ice freezes over so that dog teams can cross. Later horses can sometimes be used. If the freeze is too long delayed, a powerful tug may be employed to force its way through and carry

the accumulated mail. In 1902, by January 9th, there was nearly a carload, including all the Christmas mail, waiting to be taken over.

It was in February of that year (1902) that B. Larsen, keeper of the oil supply at Beaver Island, braved the mid-winter blizzard at twenty degrees below zero, and the chances of dropping through wide cracks in the ice of Lake Michigan, to get to Charlevoix to claim his bride, Miss Helen Jasin. He drove with a pony thirty miles across the ice to Naubinway on the lake, drove from the port to Naubinway on the railroad, where he caught a train to Trout Lake and from there to St. Ignace, across the Straits to Mackinaw City, and thence to Petoskey and Charlevoix. After the wedding, they bought their supplies for the winter and started for their new home, arriving there by the same circuitous route.

In January, 1925, the mail carrier with two companions, bringing fourteen sacks of mail from Beaver Island to the mainland, had to abandon it, when they struck a raging storm in crossing the ice to Cross Village. William Boyle said it was one of the worst trips he had made in his fifteen years as mail carrier.

In Strang's day they had on the island a skillful physician, Dr. H. D. McCulloch. Friend alike to Mormons and Gentiles, he eventually sided with the latter, though for a long time an adherent of the Mormon tenets. About thirty years ago, another physician, a summer resident, used often to spend his winters on the island. But for many years there was no physician except as a chance "resorter" might happen to be of that profession.

Father Jewell, for a number of years the resident priest, carried the islanders through a severe epidemic of diphtheria when no doctor could come from the mainland, by telephoning constantly to Charlevoix for instructions, and using his own common sense and a natural skill in medicine, sharpened by experience.

In the winter of 1923, a man lay near death on the island, suffering with a fractured skull. An airplane from Selfridge Field, carrying a physician, was making every effort to reach the island. There was an epidemic of influenza there and many other serious cases, and the telephone calls were urgent. Not knowing of the airplane expedition, a brave doctor from Levering, J. B. Brown, had set out across the ice from Cross Village, driving a horse, and piloted by a fisherman. He reached St. James just after the airplane had made

a successful landing on the large inland island lake, Genesareth; it had taken him about fourteen hours to make the crossing. They had constantly to drive out and around open water. He left the fracture case to Dr. R. N. Armstrong, the arrival by airplane, and found himself busy enough in attending the other patients, many of them at death's door. He remained over a week on the island before he could return home. There is now a physician, Dr. Russell Palmer, partly paid by the State Health Department, who resides on Beaver.

One of the best stories Harold Titus has written is the one of the doctor who makes a perilous crossing to Beaver Island during a diphtheria epidemic, woven out of all these incidents, with a magic woof of human interest and domestic tragedy that makes it read like the saga of a soul redeemed by service. It is called *The Other Doctor*, and appeared originally in the *Elks' Magazine* for March, 1924.

Modern advances are to end the isolation of the islands. Arthur W. Stace says that "there is now (1926) an airline to the Beavers—an island company now owns three commercial airplanes which are used for exhibitions and for passenger-carrying at northern Michigan resorts, and which may be the forerunners of a regular passenger service between the islands and the mainland."²³

This new method of carriage will no doubt be a boon to the islanders, but gone will be the old delightful days when loneliness was not loneliness in the sadder sense of the words, but meant only peace and rest and quiet. Those were the days when the world-weary could look back upon their sojourns on Beaver Island with its Arcadia-like simplicity, its sunny noons and moonlight nights unracked by the bustle and hurry of the outside world, longing to again share its primitive joys.

When the evening falls on Beaver,
And the setting sun has rolled
To the westward of the islands
In a sea of molten gold,

Then the cows go wandering slowly,
Through the woods beside the lake,
And the tinkle of the cow-bells
Sounds along the paths they take.

²³Detroit News, Feb. 6, 1927.

And all night they tinkle, tankle,
From afar; and then, more clear
Towards the morning, coming homeward,
Tinkling as they draw a-near.

Memory often listens for them
'Mid the city's roar and rush,
Listens for that sound of music
Falling on the night's still hush.

Nights with skies all starry-studded,
Water lapping on the shore,—
O the tinkling bells of Beaver,
Shall I never hear them more?

THREE ISLANDS

There are three islands guard the Straits
Upon the Huron shore;
The largest and the least of these
Are covered o'er with verdant trees—

OR WERE, before man, needing fuel, started robbing them of their verdure. These three islands are Round Island, Bois Blanc Island and Mackinac Island. The largest of these is Bois Blanc, called by the Indians Mi-ko-bi-min-iss, or Basswood Island.¹

Bois Blanc Island was "an extra and voluntary gift of the Chipewewa nation" when Mackinac Island was ceded to the United States at the treaty of Greenville.² It is a large island,³ and forms the north side of what is known as the South Channel of the Straits of Mackinaw. From its south-easterly point shoals extend nearly to Poe Reef, where a light vessel has long been stationed. A coast-guard station is located at Walker's Point on the east side of the island. For a great many years there has been a lighthouse at the northern end of the island. In the great storm of December, 1837, it was blown down⁴ but was soon replaced. Bryant, in 1846, tells of his trip to Mackinac, and of "the sandy isle of Bois Blanc, the name of which is commonly corrupted to Bob-low Island, thickly covered with pines, and showing a tall lighthouse on the point nearest us."

If the conclusions of H. C. Campbell⁵ are worthy of consideration, Bois Blanc may wrest from Manitoulin the distinction of a description in Radisson, about 1654. But later mention of it is connected with Mackinac island, as a wooding place for that rocky bit of land. Bailey tells of the old apple trees on the island, intimating that it was used as an orchard and garden by the Indians and early French settlers. The sugar camps on Bois Blanc, owned by Mackinac islanders, are delightfully described by Elizabeth Thérèse Baird; and later there were gardens there worked by the Presbyterian Mission at Mackinac.

¹*Mich. Hist. Mag.*, II, 555.

²Aug. 3, 1795.

³11½ mi. NNW and ESE, with width of 4¾ miles at its south-easterly end, and 1¼ mi. at its north-westerly end. Bulletin 32, Survey of Northern and Northwestern Lakes.

⁴Wood, *Historic Mackinac*, II, 230.

⁵*American Historical Review*, I, 234.

Bois Blanc figures in the War of 1812 as a shelter for the fleet of Sinclair, as they maneuvered about, trying to find an opportunity to attack the British at the fort. There is a legend of gold buried on the island during this war, whether by refugees from Mackinac or soldiers and sailors of the fleet, is not quite clear. It may be a story transplanted bodily from Drummond Island, with the feeling that any large island should have at least one legend of buried treasure.

Attached in 1818 to Mackinac County, then having its seat on Mackinac island, Bois Blanc later followed the county to its seat at St. Ignace. There is always a strong sentiment for connecting it with Cheboygan county, with which its interests seem more closely allied. In late winter the people of the island, a small population, can make their way over the ice to Mackinac island or to the mainland at Cheboygan, but in summer and during that part of the fall and spring when the channel is clear, their communication is by boat with Cheboygan, a small boat but a stout one. It is at Cheboygan that the summer residents leave the railroad for their voyage to Point aux Pins and Walker's Point, where their cottages are located.

In July of the year 1880, Bois Blanc furnished to Cheboygan one of its greatest sensations. It was discovered to be the refuge of a noted outlaw, Henry English, who had escaped from arrest in Elk County, Pennsylvania, by killing an officer. Traced to the vicinity of Cheboygan by Pinkerton men, he was believed by the sheriff to be in hiding on the fishing grounds of Bois Blanc Island. The desperate mountaineer was described as thirty-five years old, six feet high and quick as a cat, a perfect athlete. So great was the dread that reports of his exploits had inspired that the most elaborate and unusual preparations were made for his capture and subsequent return to the authorities in the east. The sheriff's force, carefully instructed, somewhat fearfully awaited his expected visit, for the fishermen came over often, and he had been spotted on one of his previous trips. Sheriff Paquette and his brother finally espied the outlaw, sitting out in front of a saloon opposite the Ottawa House, the building still standing but now converted to other uses. Approaching with the utmost caution, they seized him from behind before he was aware of their intentions.

He proved to be a most docile captive. Mildly amused at the terror he had excited, he said that he had killed only in self-defense; that he had got a greater reputation than he deserved. They insisted, however, on putting him into the harness they had especially constructed for him, binding him so that he could hardly move. During his captivity here, as later in New York, he completely won the hearts of all who came in contact with him, though they never dared relax their vigilance. He was taken by the inland route to Petoskey, where they could reach the railroad, as there was no rail service to Cheboygan at that time. All the town was down to see him off, and all Petoskey was there to witness his arrival. Strange indeed had been the adventures of this plain mountaineer: "wounded in seven places, he had laid out in the woods" till sufficiently recovered to flee to Canada. He told that while he was thus hiding, he saw the old country doctor pass; he longed to ask for aid, but realizing that the doctor would either have to give him up or compromise with his conscience by shielding him, he decided to stick it out alone. From Canada he went to Detroit, and finally to Cheboygan, seeking asylum on the lonely island among the fishermen. Then came his capture, and the journey through the curious crowds, shackled and guarded like a wild beast.

THE OUTLAW OF BOIS BLANC

They made him a harness stout and strong—
Hard is the road, and the way is long,
For the transgressor.

For the curious crowd 'twas a gala time—
What cared they as to whether the crime
Was greater or lesser?

At Indian River and Topinabee,
Woodsmen and Indians stared as though he
Were Little Harpe's successor.

And he faced them all with a patient smile,
Without bravado or anger or guile,
Nor asked intercessor;

Conscious that only a higher might
Could sift the reasons and fix the right
"Twixt aggrieved and aggressor.

On the trial the detectives who had accompanied him expressed their admiration of his "calm and resignation," and his acquittal of

the charge of murder is chronicled in the Cheboygan paper of October twenty-eight with sincere interest.

Unlike Mackinac, Bois Blanc permits autos, and there are quite a number there in summer, "too many", one of the residents says, "for the narrow roads of the island." A prospectus of the island as an aviation port, published in 1927, says, "The island is all high and dry, with four beautiful inland lakes A fifty-five acre aeroplane landing-field and athletic field near the Northern Lights Hotel is being prepared, and is to be named the Lindberg-Byrd Aviation Field of Bois Blanc Island".

When aviation becomes general it will be the ideal solution for getting to and from the islands of the Great Lakes all the year round. Between Bois Blanc and Au Sable on the mainland, the famed Bois Blanc icebridge forms early, sometimes in December, and then it often remains until spring. Between Mackinac and Bois Blanc, it takes longer. In 1927, not until March was the wood-hauling from Bois Blanc to Mackinac reported at its height.

Walker's Point Coast Guard Station functions all winter long, and is at all times an important aid to life on the island; during the season of navigation, warning vessels off the beaches and reefs, saving the crews and what they can of the cargo of foundering, stranded and wrecked boats. A survey of the report of even one year's activities of any of these coast-guard stations gives one some idea of their value, and of the inadequacy of the pay of the men, considering the constant vigilance and the risks demanded of them.

Since the days when the Chippewas relinquished their claim to the island with magnanimity that brought but poor returns, there have been many projects for its disposal. Held by the Federal government as a wood reserve for Mackinac island, where wood-cutting is forbidden, it passed with Mackinac to the State of Michigan. Land was sold there, the money so acquired to be used in building the boulevard around Mackinac island. Denuded by lumbering operations of its larger trees, several summer resorts sprung up on Bois Blanc, the best known called Point aux Pins. Whenever a new resort is planned, the older residents of Cheboygan recall the famous "Bois Blanc Gardens" fiasco, when island lots were offered with theatre tickets, the person holding a winning number getting a lot free. It is averred that these lots were in a swamp,

and were not worth recording. However this may have been, there is plenty of land on the island "high and dry", as the aviation projectors claim, and for one who wishes to escape from the thralls of convention, no more beautiful spot could be found along the Huron shore. Even a short visit is well worth the trip across stormy waters, while when the weather is fine, the journey on the boat is in itself a delightful adventure.

Though really quite a distance, from Bois Blanc to Round Island seems but a step, the water is so shallow. During the War of 1812, we are told that some of Sinclair's fleet passed through this channel. Without charts, they dared some things mariners of the present day would avoid. In a letter of September 3, 1814, Sinclair writes to the Secretary of the Navy,⁶ "there is nothing like anchorage in Lake Huron, except in the mouth of rivers I have been several times in great danger of total loss in this extremely hazardous navigation, entirely unknown to our pilots except direct to Mackinac, by falling suddenly from no soundings into three fathoms These dangers might be avoided, from the transparency of the waters, but for the continued thick fogs which prevail almost as constantly as on the Grand Bank."

Round Island is small and hilly and about three miles in circumference. Its lighthouse on the hook of land south of Mackinac Island is very picturesque in appearance.

From the very earliest times, it was evidently used as a burial ground by the Indians. This is referred to by Mary Hartwell Catherwood in her charming story, "The Skeleton on Round Island" in *Mackinac and Lake Stories*. In his diary, Schoolcraft records, "Went to Round Island with Mr. Featherstonehaugh and Lieutenant Mather. Examined the ancient ossuaries and the scenery on the island".

During the War of 1812, the Americans had explored Round Island with a view to planting a battery there, and during their explorations with Ambrose Davenport as guide, they were pursued by the Indians allied to the British on Mackinac Island. One of their men stopping to gather and eat some of the delicious raspberries then ripening—it was in August, and who, having tasted the island berries, can wonder at him?—was captured and carried back

⁶Wood, *Historic Mackinac*, I, app. 631.

to the fort. Only through the prompt intervention of the British officers did he escape death by the most hideous forms of torture.

Afterward, when the fort had been taken over by the Americans, and the British had reluctantly retired to Drummond Island, Round Island became one of the bones of contention between the somewhat querulous commanders of the two lately opposing forces. It was claimed as the property of Mrs. Mitchell, the remarkable Indian wife of the British surgeon, David Mitchell. McDouall, the British commander, says in a letter to Major General Robinson, September 24, 1815, "they have also taken from her a small island adjoining never purchased by the Americans, but which was last year, (with my concurrence) unanimously presented to her by her relations the Chippewas in return for her kindness to them".⁷

This may have been some such gift as a man makes when about to go into bankruptcy, for the Indians had probably already then concluded that the Americans would be victorious and would take it away from them.

Round Island has a later history as the home of the old Medicine Man, Chusco, or Wachusco, celebrated by Jameson, Schoolcraft and others. In the history of Les Cheneaux Islands, by Frank R. Grover, Chusco is said to have been one of the signers of the Treaty of Greenville, 1795. He died and was buried on Round Island in 1837.

A description of the island in 1835 says "Its dark treetops mark almost a perfect arch upon the sky, so regularly does the land rise from every side toward the center, and so completely is it clothed with an unbroken forest." Another writer speaking of Round Island and of Bois Blanc, touched with autumn frosts, says that "they are like gay bouquets upon the water". Beautiful in its primeval verdure, Round Island was indeed a fit burial place in which to lay the old warrior of Fallen Timbers beside the graves of his fathers. Although a convert to Christianity, he sleeps beside those who once followed the gods he was wont to invoke in his medicine dances, when the tent shook with the wrath of the Great Spirit.

During the cholera epidemic, boats forbidden to land at Mackinac, buried their dead on Round Island.

A letter from the Department of Commerce, Light House Service, dated January 24, 1928, states, "Practically the entire island . . . has

⁷*Mich. Hist. Colls.*, XVIII, 83.

been recently transferred to the State of Michigan for park purposes. This was accomplished by Congressional legislation and leaves the Government only a small portion of the island upon which the lighthouse is located."

The same letter says, "In the case of Bois Blanc Island this light was changed from oil to acetylene on April 17, 1924. At the same time the services of the keeper were dispensed with and the light made unwatched.⁸ Later, on August 24, 1925, that portion of the reservation, including the dwelling and boathouse, was advertised for bids and sold to the highest bidder who is using it as a summer home. The light is still maintained, however, but on a separate structure, a skeleton steel tower, located not far from the old lighthouse on the portion of the reservation retained by the United States."⁹

The Indian name of Round Island is given by Father Gagnieur¹⁰ as Nissawinagong, the Middle Island. Thus is recognized its place as a connecting link between the two larger islands, Bois Blanc and Mackinac.

There are three islands guard the Straits
Upon the Huron shore.
The largest and the least of these
Are covered o'er with verdant trees,
But Mackinac has richer store
Charm of old legendary lore
That echoes with the sighing of the breeze
Upon the Huron shore.

This lore has been so assiduously collected and the legends so well told in numerous volumes, that later writers can only hope to add a few echoes of the old time stories to the history of the Queen of the Straits, gathering up some unconsidered trifles to fill in the gaps.

From the time that the United States, then a weak and unstable federation, found herself at the close of the Revolution, the titular owner, though not the possessor of the "posts on the Lakes", longing eyes were turned to Mackinac. Again and again the officers of the government and of the army tried to pierce the veil of mystery regarding the island stronghold of which they had heard so much. General Wayne refers to these posts again and again in his letters

⁸For description of these unwatched lights see *Mich. Hist. Mag.*, X, 436-7.

⁹Signed, "Charles A. Park, Superintendent of Lighthouses, Eleventh District," Detroit, Mich.

¹⁰*Mich. Hist. Mag.*, II, 555.

to Secretary of War Knox, and to his immediate subordinate, General James Wilkinson. In 1792, he writes that he "regards an Indian peace as hopeless as long as the British retain the forts on the Lakes—they ought to have been delivered up eight years ago." It is heartbreaking to read these letters and to know of the insolence and arrogance of the British ministers toward our representatives in London who were trying to adjust this matter. Had these posts been given up promptly, much bloodshed could have been avoided. Papers obtained from the Canadian archives show plainly that the British commanders were taking every advantage of this delay to encourage the Indian resistance.

Some letters found in the Wayne papers at the Pennsylvania Historical Society reveal that Wilkinson understood and valued the importance of espionage (or what is now called intelligence or liaison service) as fully as did Washington.

One R(euben) Reynolds had deserted from Fort St. Clair by permission, in fact by order, of Wilkinson. He was captured and sold to a family of Wyandots, by them sold to some Miamis. With them he descended the St. Joseph into Lake Michigan, and was conveyed from there to Michilimackinac. There he continued twenty days, living in the capacity of a kitchen servant in the family of "Mr. Champion".

"The British fort is garrisoned by a company of sixty men commanded by Captain William Doyle of the Twenty-fourth Regiment. The fortification is of stone of a circular form with two bastions at each corner of the front—he was not allowed to go within the fort—Indians were daily coming in and going from the fort. He saw arms, ammunition, scalping knives, provisions and so forth given to them, but whether sold as from the traders or given to them on other accounts he could not learn. The soldiers of the garrison appeared to be inveterate against the Indians. He heard nothing of the Grand Council to be held.¹¹ Chiefs went down to Canada it was said for the purpose of consulting the Governor with respect to the war with the Americans. After remaining at Michilimackinac twenty days as before noted, he had a passport given him by Captain

¹¹This was probably the council upon which Washington was depending for a peace to avert the necessity of action against the savages, and for which Gen. Rufus Putnam had been sent to the frontiers.

Doyle in a boat of "Mr. Campion's",¹² and he accordingly set out and went along Lake Huron two hundred and forty miles to the French River, from thence into a lake called by the French *Nipsang*, afterwards into the Grand River and down to Montreal, from which place he came through Vermont to Philadelphia. He says that the American prisoners were held as slaves."¹³

That General Wayne did not have as high an appreciation of this service, is shown by the following letters, one from Wilkinson at Fort Washington to General Knox, November 3, 1792:

"Sir: I have this evening received advice that a man had arrived at Pittsburgh who reported himself as a spy sent by me into the Indian towns, from whence he had made his escape; my informant does not remember the name of this man; but says his deposition has been made public by General Wayne. If this be true it is unfortunate because it not only destroys this agent's future utility in the same line but will bar the door against our emissaries from every quarter. I did expect that May of the First Regiment or Reynolds of the Second might make for Pittsburgh as they were allowed to do in case they should find it necessary; if the person in question answers to either of the above-named he should be retained in service and sent to this post as a guide for future occasions".

Another letter follows, one from Wayne to Wilkinson of November seventh in which he says, "with this detachment goes a certain Reuben Reynolds, who charges that he is a sergeant in Captain H. Buell's company of the Second Sub-Legion, and that he was directed by you to leave the army under the character of a deserter in order to make discoveries, about the twelfth May last; he seems to have taken a very circuitous route and gives no very material information except as to the hostile intentions of the Indians."

Is it possible that blunders like this in making public such information, and in undervaluing the reports of spies, were the cause of the deaths of Hardin and Trueman, sent as emissaries to the Indians?

General Wilkinson's interest in the island led him to visit it later. After he succeeded General Wayne as Commander in Chief of the United States Army, a letter from Caleb Swan, dated from Detroit,

¹²This is spelled the two ways in the document.

¹³Wayne Papers, XXII, 74, 110. Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

1797, is prefaced as follows: "General Wilkinson arrived here in June; and after making some prompt arrangements for the garrison, proposed a voyage to Michilimackinac and invited me to accompany him¹⁴ and on the fourth day of August we embarked in a sloop of about seventy tons burden. We had a safe and pleasant trip, not only to Michilimackinac but even into Lake Superior; and returned to this place on the fourth of last month (September) highly gratified indeed."¹⁵

That Wilkinson's visit to Mackinac was not wholly one of curiosity is shown in the conclusions voiced in a memorial to Alexander Hamilton, dated New York, September 4, 1799, in answer to a request of Hamilton, then Secretary of War. After some general recommendations, the wisdom of which was shown by succeeding events, he says, "it is my decided opinion that the height which looks into the present works of Michilimackinac should be occupied by a strong but regular work, and the garrison transferred to it. This precaution with proper endowments will enable two hundred and fifty men to defend the place ; combined to these preparations we must have a navy for Lake Erie to bear some proportion to that of the enemy although I have no return from Mackinac I believe the heaviest metal there are brass six pounders and five and a half-inch howitzers . ." He recommends strengthening the garrison at that post in point of men and equipment.

These recommendations, he says, were approved by Hamilton and Washington, but the measures to carry them into execution "were arrested by the unexpected accommodation of our differences with France, and the sudden reduction of our army."

By those historians content to condemn him as a traitor, little attention has been directed to the soldierly qualifications of Wilkinson, but a careful study of the document quoted will convince anyone that the advice therein contained, had it been carried out, might have averted the second war with Great Britain. The surrender of Mackinac, bringing in its train the surrender of Detroit, was the greatest blow the nation suffered, and probably the unprepared condition of the northern post was a great encouragement

¹⁴Swan was paymaster of the army.

¹⁵*American Historical Magazine*, Jan., 1888, pp. 74, 75.

to the British in their intrigues with the Indians. The construction of Fort George¹⁶ by the British shows an appreciation of Wilkinson's point of view. The fact that the defenses of Fort George were later demolished by the officers at Fort Mackinac¹⁷ has no real strategic significance, as it was not then defended. It had proved impregnable to Lt. Hanks when it was occupied by the foe with only hastily prepared entrenchments, and "one iron six-pounder."¹⁸

An incident of the British occupation of the fort is given in a letter from Elizabeth Whitney Williams, author of "A Child of the Sea".

"In my mother's childhood days the water was high up the cliffs in many places, the evergreens have grown as well as other trees in other places where there used to be none.¹⁹ I cannot tell whether I shall ever be able to write the story that is so fascinating to me—it might not be to others—, but when I used to listen to my mother tell all the happenings that led up to her being adopted into the Indian tribe to save her life, I wish I could make it as real to others as it was to me.

"She was born under the British flag at Fort Mackinac, May 5, 1796. The Stars and Stripes should have floated over the fort, but news traveled slow in those days, and it was some time in October before the truth was known that Mackinac Island belonged to the United States and that St. Joseph's Island in the Soo River was given to the British in its place. So the American Indians were not satisfied to have a British subject so close to them; then my mother had to be adopted into the tribe to save her life. Before this her mother and father had passed [beyond?], and Michael Dousman had adopted her into his household, and had promised her own father that they would give her the home and care of a real father and mother, which they did; . . . her father placed a

¹⁶Afterwards known as Fort Holmes.

¹⁷A supposed triumph of military skill.

¹⁸The memorial of Wilkinson above quoted was printed by him in his *Memoirs* in 1816, and it may be urged that he might have inserted this paragraph after knowing of the Fort Holmes affair, were it not that he says in a note (I, 445) "And yet with a transcript of this memoir in the war department, from the year 1802, not a single step was taken on this recommendation." Congressman Carl E. Mapes of the Fifth District has caused a search to be made in the War Department for this memorial or the transcript, and reports no copy can be found. It is unlikely, however, that Wilkinson would have cared thus to challenge the department at that time unless such a transcript had been there. There would have been too many who would have known about it in 1816, and too many interested in denying it.

¹⁹See old prints and descriptions of the Island.

large sum of money in their hands for her care and her dowry in later years. . . .

"Several times I have thought of writing a little story just as a history of the customs of the Indians when they made an adoption of anyone into their tribe; their promises are very solemn and they never break a promise, it is always kept sacred. Mr. Dousman paid a sum of a few hundred dollars to have her taken into the tribe as he saw it was the only way to save the child's life."

Frederick Bates who held court in Mackinac for the Northwest Territory (and finally succeeded Wilkinson as governor of the northern part of the Louisiana Territory), visited the island in 1799, and was very much impressed with the fortifications. He writes to his mother, August 15, 1800; "In one of the last fall vessels I went to Michilimackinac, and in one of the first spring vessels I shall visit that island a second time. The length of the voyage is sufficiently compensated by the beauty of the place and the superior elegance of its improvements. If the natural situation is not entirely impregnable, much labor and some art have effectively supplied the deficiency. After night the lights in the fort appear from the foot of the hill like stars in the heavens."

It may have been at Mackinac that Bates formed the acquaintance of Robert Dickson, and learned to repose in him the confidence which was to result so disastrously for the United States in the War of 1812.

Several letters to Bates show the further progress of events at Mackinac. One is of interest as testimony to the value of the fort garden. "Michilimackinac, November 8, 1802. . . . For instance, our commanding officer came here just in time to reap the fruits of my labor, and he has done it completely by taking possession (of) and keeping all the vegetables in the public (the old word for *government*) garden, which were planted by me and cost me no inconsiderable trouble and expense"! This is signed N. B. Whiley, who adds, "I should be glad if you can send me a couple of small beefs and a few sheep if to be got on reasonable terms by the first vessel in the spring."²⁰

In October of the next year is a short letter from David Duncan, Collector of the Port. After disposing of business, he adds, "The

²⁰Burton Historical Collections, Detroit Public Library.

island of Mackinac affords nothing new. The people are as happy as it is possible for potatoes and whitefish to make them."²¹

After the War of 1812, the fur trade increased in prosperity, but this had been thoroughly dealt with by many chroniclers. Evidently there was even then a considerable trade in fish. In a Dayton, Ohio, paper of August, 1815 (the Ohio Republican) is an article by Alex C. Lanier, in which he proposes the formation of a salting company at Cleveland, "to salt the fish in barrels in the Upper Lakes, as they are superior there."²²

This matter of the early fishing trade has not received much attention. One is amazed at the figures gathered by Marryat, on his visit in 1837. "At Mackinac alone they cure about two thousand barrels [of trout and whitefish, salted down, and sent to the west and south], which sell for ten dollars the barrel; at the Sault, about the same quantity; and on Lake Superior at the station of the American Fur Company, they had commenced the fishing, to lessen the expense of the establishment, and they now salt down about four thousand barrels; but this traffic is still in its infancy and will become more profitable as the west becomes more populous."

He notes another source of profit, "the collecting of the maple sugar; and this staple, if I may use the term, is rapidly increasing. . . . At Mackinaw they receive about three hundred thousand pounds every year."

The Irish immigrants were then beginning to come in, and being many of them from the northern part of Ireland, and fishermen there, they took more readily to the fishing than to the fur trade.

Reverend Meade Williams refers to this period (around 1830-37) as the time of the greatest development of the social life on the island. At the time of which Gordon Hubbard tells, and when Dr. Beaumont first came to the island, society had not attained the heights which were later to be scaled. A glimpse of the later period is afforded by reference to the naive recital of the experiences of Eliza Chappell Porter, who went to Mackinac in 1831 to teach the children of Robert Stuart. "She loved to tell how going into the wilds of the north among missionaries and Indians, she feared that even her modest wardrobe, which although simple, was in the then

²¹*Ibid.*

²²Dayton Public Library.

modern city fashion, might prove inappropriate. Whatever it was necessary to add to it was of the most inexpensive materials and made in the severest plainness. Who that heard will ever forget the genuine mirth with which she told of her introduction into Mr. Stuart's luxurious home, to a style of living and of attention to the requirements of society such as were new to her. As the representative of the great company on the island, Mr. Stuart entertained all persons of note who visited that part of the country, and the missionary or governess wardrobe needed immediate attention to make it at all appropriate for the stately dinners and other gatherings at which as a member of his family she must appear. Miss Chappell was still so young and always adapted herself so easily to new conditions that probably no one but herself realized her embarrassment and surprise. But all her life it made her wonderfully quick to see and prompt to help those similarly situated. She used to say, 'I remember how I felt at Mackinaw!' . . . She keenly enjoyed dainty appointments and all the little elegancies in the home which wealth afforded, and as long as she lived was fond of quoting Mr. and Mrs. Stuart as authority on points of social decorum."²³

Her diary and letters written during her stay on the island have been paraphrased and edited by her niece. Unfortunately for the historian, less is given of actual happenings than of the writer's spiritual development, but as the book was prepared for the benefit of a religious organization, the editor may be the best judge as to her choice of matter. Here and there are gleaned some really pertinent historical notes. Among topics not so often treated by books on the island, are found valuable references to the cholera epidemic. An account of a mission opened at St. Ignace gives a vivid picture of conditions there. Some phases of social life that particularly interested her are worthy of remark.

In July, she writes, "Today I dined at Mr. Mitchell's in company with an Indian trader and wife who have just arrived from the wintering grounds." "These traders usually marry" the daughters of chiefs who feel it an honor to give them "to these great men, as they esteem the traders to be. From these unions . . . have arisen a race less stable in character than either whites or Indians.

²³Eliza Chappell Porter, *A Memoir*, 1892.

. The mission school is composed almost entirely of this class, but few unmixed Indians."²⁴

July 24th, "Our island is a scene of excitement. Two of the traders who are members of our church are to be married to Indian girls of the Mission family. This is the custom of the traders who you understand are intelligent white men. They marry Indian girls and take them into the interior. Some of them are several thousand miles beyond us. Our school prepares these girls to make their families happy and to be themselves very useful among their people if disposed."

A comment of Marryat's is here added. "It is remarkable that although the Americans treat the negro with contumely, they have a respect for the red Indian; a well-educated halfbreed Indian is not debarred from entering into society; indeed they are generally received with great attention. The daughter of a celebrated Indian chief brings heraldry into the family", and he cites the case of Pocahontas.

Some facts about the mission school are to be found in the Porter narrative, which are of value, for as Meade Williams says, "We have but scanty record of these teachers". She speaks of the number who went into the far posts with the Indians, and gives some other particulars of interest.

One of the teachers at the Mission School was named Mason Hearsey, and from a granddaughter have been gleaned a few facts about his enlistment in the work. He was born at Canton Point, Maine, July 6, 1809, and had been teaching in schools in his native state for four years when he was appointed to the Mackinac Mission. His granddaughter says, "I had heard Grandmother tell of his stopping at Boston and going into the music house of Lowell Mason to purchase a violin, and Mr. Mason got into conversation with him, and learning that he was on his way to teach in a mission school in the wilds of Northern Michigan, told him to select any instrument he wished, and made him a present of it." On his way to the mission he made quite a tour, and wrote his brother an interesting account of the various cities visited.²⁵ The letter is dated "River St. Lawrence, 8 miles below Lake Erie, July

²⁴But there were also white pupils. McKenney, ed. 1827, p. 387.

²⁵This letter is now in the Hall-Fowler Memorial Library at Ionia, Michigan.

1, 1834." "This eve, if weather and circumstances will serve, I think of starting up the Lake. It will take 2 days and ½ to Detroit, where I shall probably be detained two or three days and then start for Michilimackinac. This will require 23 days more. At Buffalo I have met with four persons who either are or have been connected with the Mackinac Mission, and from the information I got from them I do not feel disappointed in the prospect before me. Many things will probably try me and some will be pleasures. From all I can learn I think my situation will be as pleasant as any at that place."

Another granddaughter writes, "Grandfather was a very studious man, and at home never did much talking. He was very friendly with the Indians and learned a good deal of their language." After he left Mackinac, he joined the Dexter Colony at Ionia and married Caroline Cornell, a daughter of one of the founders of Ionia, on September 3, 1837. He died September 20, 1882.

From similar personal relations may in time be gathered data regarding the school and teachers of the mission, not important in themselves but contributing to an understanding of the period. From Martin Heydenburk's reminiscences and from the letter referred to, and from notes in an old copy of a History of Michigan by Landman, once the property of Mason Hearsey, and annotated by him, we may be justified in concluding that the character of the teaching force was of a high order. Mrs. Porter's comments would corroborate this opinion.

It was at about this time that the first island newspaper of which any record exists was started. Schoolcraft, in his diary, says that a letter from his brother, December 31, 1840, says that "Theodoric has undertaken to conduct a weekly paper, the *Pic Nic*, which thus far goes off well." This "Theodoric" was a young Virginian whom Schoolcraft had befriended. In April, 1840, he was in the "Capitol", as a representative for the county of Mackinac in the legislature.

Whether the "Pic Nic" was written or printed is not stated. There is an old printing press on the island which is still used to print off handbills. Whether this was in existence at that time, who can say? But it may quite likely have been this press which was used in printing the *Mackinac Herald*, published just before the

Civil War. The copy owned by Mr. Charles Smythe of Cheboygan is No. 9 of Volume II, and is dated Saturday, June 2, 1860. "Published every Saturday during the season of navigation at the Island of Mackinac, Michigan by J. L. Gantt." This paper seems weak on local news, being mainly concerned with outstate matters (it has a good deal of its space devoted to the nomination of Lincoln) and two articles by William J. Johnston on the historic significance of Michilimackinac and St. Ignace.

What would be of more value today, would be the accounts of marriages, births and deaths, to which more modern newspapers even yet give some notice. The early Catholic church records are quite complete in this regard but the Presbyterian Mission seems lacking in such statistics. In the very comprehensive researches that Meade Williams made concerning the old Mission Church, there is found no reference to any marriages celebrated therein. Mrs. Porter mentions weddings both among the missionaries and the townspeople but does not say where they were solemnized. A family tradition credits the church with being the scene of a romantic marriage between an officer of the garrison, Lieutenant Caleb C. Sibley, and the daughter of one of the founders of the church, Ambrose Davenport. Her name was Nancy, and as the name of Nancy Davenport has been chosen for the heroine of a story of the island during the War of 1812, by Frances Margaret Fox, more may in time be learned of the wedding which was quite likely the first in the newly finished church.

Of course, it would have to be an earlier newspaper than the *Pic Nic* that could have recorded that wedding. But many an incident of the later years might be dated could we find a file of the old island papers.

It was after the Cheboygan papers had been started, that the next island paper of which any record is found, is mentioned. In the Cheboygan Free Press of March 16, 1876, is this item: "The National Park Gazette is the name of a new paper started in Mackinaw." This paper was printed in Cheboygan. Another paper started on the island that same year, the "Mackinaw Journal", had evidently a brief career, for in November the Cheboygan paper states that the editor "is now a resident of Kentucky". April 30, 1880, came the "Mackinac County Sentinel". "It is a lively little sheet,

and we wish it success", says the Cheboygan Democrat. "Printed at the old county seat on Mackinac Island", it moved in August, 1880, to St. Ignace which "was now flourishing like the green bay tree", according to Cheboyganites. In September "the Mackinac County Sentinel denies the report that it will move back to Mackinac next summer", and on November it is suspended. It is to be hoped that a collection of some of these fugitive sheets can be made, as they would be of help in following the succession of events from 1840 to 1880.

A manuscript written by Mrs. Melissa Rice Langdon affords some pictures of life on Mackinac Island about 1846. Her father, Samuel Rice, had come to Mackinac Island to help his brother in the fisheries in the summer, and in his store in the winters. He brought thither his five motherless little girls. "Mary and Martha went to school, and Lissie [the author of the manuscript] stayed at home and cared for Emma and Annie. Their Aunt Ann lived but a short distance from them, so she taught Annie how to cook and do the work. Mary and Martha would work when they came home from school, but they did the sewing and knitting for the children. Lissie was taught to read and the winter was passing very pleasantly, and when Christmas came they all hung up their stockings; each one of the girls got a new dress and Baby Annie got a doll that opened and shut its eyes and had real hair, and Lissie and Emma got a bird with bright plumage, and oh! the candy and nuts and figs and raisins!

"There was a family by the name of Davenport that lived near them, and two children, Julia and William, who were companions of the children." After a summer on Big Fox Island, "Mary and Martha were delighted to return to their school again."

One day Lissie and Julia Davenport took their sleds, and putting Emma and Annie on them, walked up "the steep path to the old fort. 'Now, Lissie, you may start first', said Julia. So taking little Annie on the front of her sled she started, and in an instant they were dumped over the steep rocky pass that led to the lake, and in less time than it takes to tell it, they were far out on the lake bounding over loose ice. Julia, seeing for the first time that the ice was breaking up and loosening from the island, ran to assist her friend, but she could do nothing. Emma came screaming at the

top of her voice. Lissie, seeing the situation, soon stopped her sled, and taking the rope in one hand, sprang from cake to cake, the sled bounding quickly over the cracks, and they soon reached the shore in safety. The teacher had heard the screaming and came running out to see the cause of it all. She told Julia to take the children home."

"Mary, the oldest, was now almost sixteen. Three winters at school had passed for herself and Martha, and three summers on lonely islands away from school and friends and society." That summer they went to Beaver Island, whence they were later driven by the Mormons, finally settling at Traverse City.²⁶

It was about this time that Mackinac Island first showed indications of becoming a summer resort, though it had long been the fashion for all travellers in America to make a tour of the Lakes and stop there, sometimes for several days' stay, sometimes for only the interval while the steamers were unloading. From an exceedingly frank account by a British visitor in 1846, it would appear that the refinements of entertainment were not at that time very well understood, but by the eighties the accommodations were quite luxurious. However, the growth of the summer resort trade did not console the Islanders for the desertion of the island by some of their most progressive citizens during the lumbering days. Shortly after the Civil War the fishing trade declined, and the mining and lumbering interests became paramount in the north. The mushroom growth of St. Ignace brought on the removal of the county seat to that place. This was an injury not to be forgiven lightly. Everybody knows what a county seat fight means. Insult was added by the publication by a St. Ignace printer of a reprint of Strang's *Ancient and Modern Michilimackinac*, with its venomous attacks on the Mackinac Islanders.

The islanders have been somewhat unjustly blamed for the expulsion of the Mormons from Beaver Island. When one remembers that this was the natural refuge for the Cables, Wrights, Coopers, McKinleys, Bennets and others driven out from Beaver Island and obliged to abandon their property there by the despotic methods of Strang; as well as the asylum for some of his followers, disillusioned and stripped of their all; ample excuse is seen for the efforts against

²⁶*Mich. Hist. Mag.*, XI, 356.

him. After the failure of lawful methods through Strang's astuteness at political maneuvers, the people of St. Helena and Mackinac Island and along the mainland were roused to take what methods they could to right the wrongs they had suffered. This was not done in as lawless and ruthless fashion as is generally supposed, but with far greater regard for the equities than is usually shown in such affairs.

To reprint Strang's ancient slanders was certainly not a neighborly act, especially at a time when the rise of the timber interests was blotting out the importance of the Queen of the Straits. Singularly enough, there seems to have been no such bitter rivalry between Duncan and Cheboygan and the island, though these two towns drew almost as heavily as did St. Ignace from the importance of the ancient stronghold.

In 1855 the land office had been at Duncan; in the winter of 1857-58 the office, comprising the books, papers and fireproof safe, were conveyed over the ice to the island by Medard Metivier.²⁷ Cordial relationship between the towns was cemented by the winter entertainments. In 1876, the great sport of the winter was racing, and after a wonderful day of it at Cheboygan, at which participated drivers from Gros Cap, St. Helena and Mackinac Island, there is an account of the "Mackinaw Trot", when the streets of the island were crowded, the hotels filled, and horses came even from Detour and Drummond Island. Young people from Cheboygan and Duncan went to parties at the Island, but it was popular to pretend that St. Ignace was a rough lumbering town, without social distinction. On the other hand, St. Ignace flourished, and her material prosperity soon attracted more and more of the ambitious youth of the island. To the older and less progressive were left the dubious consolations of the "summer business."

But the lumber barons cut off the timber and departed, while the summer resort business grew in importance. In 1892, "the social whirl on the island was in its heyday, with yachting, sailing and riding parties, and important political conferences among its distinguished visitors." Today little is left of the old mills on the mainland, and Cheboygan and St. Ignace are beckoning the tourist trade with new inducements each season.

²⁷The land office was afterwards removed to Traverse City.

And Duncan!
Once the busiest of ports,
Deserted and dismantled!

Docks where the commerce of the inland seas
Found ample welcome
Now but skeletons that point their whitened fingers
Out of the rippled waters.
Only the stately houses with their overgrown hedges
Of cedar and lilacs and spirea,
Stand mute witnesses of grandeur long departed.

Where once were stabled hundreds of horses,
The grass is growing, wild and luxuriant.
On the rollways down which thousands of logs were sent,
The turtle blinks in the sun;
And where, in years gone by, men jostled and toiled and swore and sweated,
The cranes are flying
Over Duncan Bay.

For many years the old Mitchell house stood on the Island, a memorial of the fur-trading days. It was a distinguished house both architecturally and historically, and it was a great misfortune that it was finally torn down. The Astor trading house still stands, though altered; and, incorporated into some modern-appearing dwellings, are the old substantial beamed log-houses which the fur companies erected for their employees.

Effectually disguised also is the old house at the corner of Market and Fort Streets, only the foundation walls of the original structure remaining. These were the walls of the famous store room where St. Martin was accidentally wounded, and where Dr. Beaumont started the steps of his world-known experiments by giving him first aid.

The most picturesque building now standing is the old Biddle home, famed on the postcards as the oldest house on the island. Here it was that Edward Biddle, scion of an old and prosperous Philadelphia family, lived with his Indian bride, whose story is well and poetically told in Mina Humphrey Varnum's "A Cinderella of Mackinac Island."²⁸ This is a romantic paraphrase of the account of Mrs. Elizabeth Thérèse Baird, in her *Reminiscences*.

Here death came to the beautiful girl, the oldest daughter of that union. Her health, it is said, was blighted by the abrupt withdrawal of the attentions of a young officer, who had professed for

²⁸*Detroit Saturday Night*, Aug. 16, 23, 1913.

her the deepest attachment until he found that she was of Indian lineage.

Along the street where as a child
She played beneath the lilac bloom,
Still do they tell her sad romance,
And point you out her dormer room,
And the old parlor where she died,
Floored with the fragrant mats of grass,
From out whose window she could look
To see her recreant lover pass.
That old, old house on Astor Street
Has held its meed of joy and care;
The goodly garden now is gone
And weeds are everywhere,—
But fancy sees it in the days
When its young mistress loved it well,
Amid the joys of household ways,
Till tragedy befell.
And romance lingers round it still
Along the paths where walked, alone,
The victim of a prejudice
Not even yet outgrown.

Many interesting particulars can be gathered about the heroine of this love affair, and tales of her beauty and wit are well substantiated.

It has been generally stated that she was educated in Philadelphia in the home of Nicholas Biddle, said to be a brother of her father. According to the chart of the Biddle family as given in the Autobiography of Charles Biddle²⁹ this Edward was not a brother of Nicholas Biddle of United States Bank fame, nor of John Biddle of Detroit, but a cousin. His father, John, was a loyalist, and was banished to Canada during the Revolution. His only brother was James (who settled at Pittsburgh and married there), and there were four girls in the family.³⁰

Edward Biddle was one of the more prominent of the early traders of Mackinac Island, coming there, according to Meade Williams, after the War of 1812. He is mentioned by all the early historians, and Parkman, in his notebook, gives heed to his opinions. Biddle's

²⁹Phila 1883, in a note to which are given the names of Mackinac Island Edward Biddle's three children, Sophia, John and Sarah.

³⁰This is corroborated by Jordan, *Colonial and Revolutionary Families of Pa.*, I, 161: John (m. Boone) Deputy Quartermaster under Forbes—Royalist in the Revolution—His family came back from Nova Scotia to Pennsylvania. (Evidently the only Royalist in the family, the rest all distinguished in the patriot cause). It may be supposed that Sophia Biddle was named for her father's oldest sister, her middle name for his mother.

Point was named for him, and the site of the present golf grounds near the Grand Hotel was long known as Biddle Field. He bought the old house in 1827, some eight years after his marriage. It is supposed to have been built (or at least a part of it) as early as 1780. His trading house, afterward the Biddle & Drew store, stood where now is the Community House. He held positions of trust under Cass, and was twice president of the village of Mackinac.

No record that Sophia ever visited Philadelphia has been found, and the descendants of her sister know of no such visits. She was evidently educated in Detroit where she lived in the family of John Biddle, a cousin of her father's.

In an old scrap-book at the Burton Historical Library, and in Friend Palmer's "Early Days in Detroit", are found references to her sojourn in Detroit. One account speaks of John Biddle as a brother of Nicholas, and describes him as "a gentleman of the old school, Chesterfieldian in manners. Another brother, Edward Biddle, was a fur-trader at Mackinac, where he married the daughter of an Indian chief. His daughter Sophia was a beautiful young lady with raven tresses and a fair complexion. She was a belle of this city (Detroit) in the late thirties, but sickened and died of consumption."

An unusual incident is thus chronicled, "On their return from Washington, July, 1833, [Black Hawk and his son] stopped awhile in Detroit. I saw them both. The son was indeed a fine specimen of the Indian athlete, tall, tawney, muscular,—handsome, too. Wonderfully dressed, he attracted more attention than all the others, especially from the female portion of the community. Received it without betraying the slightest emotion, or the slightest interest in what was going on around him. I have seen many good specimens of the Indian, but I think this son of Black Hawk excelled them all; a noble specimen of physical beauty, a model for one who would embody an ideal of strength.

"Young Black Hawk fell desperately in love with a prominent society belle and wanted to honor her by making her his squaw. She declined the proffered dignity for reasons best known to herself, but she never married. The lady was Miss Sophia Biddle of Mackinac Island."

It was while at Detroit that Sophia Biddle is said to have won the heart of Lieutenant John C. Pemberton, of the Fourth United States Artillery. He came of an old Philadelphia family, always more or less friendly with the Biddles. To all his protestations she made but one answer, "You must first see my mother." Somewhat puzzled by this, he was yet forced to wait. Transferred to Mackinac Island, he lost no time in calling at the Biddle home. Mrs. Edward Biddle always wore her Indian dress, and she spoke only Indian and French. When he saw her, the dapper young lieutenant turned and fled, nevermore to enter that door. One account says that Sophia was watching from an upper window. Another account says that she was present at the meeting; that he turned to her and said, "What, is this *your* mother!", then left abruptly, without other explanation or farewell. Martha Tanner, who nursed Sophia through her last illness, is the authority for the latter version.³¹

Was Pemberton's conduct prophetic of the way in which he was to turn from the flag he had sworn to defend? If so, his defeat at Vicksburg was sufficient reward for his wavering in love and war.

Sophia is said to have been unusually lovely, with dark hair and blue eyes, tall and slender, exceedingly fair. Martha Tanner used to tell that she always carried her head a bit to one side, like a flower drooping on its stem.

The mother had also a very fair complexion. It is averred by some that she could not have been wholly of Indian blood. This supposition is borne out by a genealogy owned by one of her descendants, which gives her father's name as De La Vigne, her mother's as Mary Le Fevre. But there is no claim on the part of the family that she was not of Indian blood. She was said to have had unusual dignity and poise, and great gentleness. She was very neat. She had a wonderful flower garden at the rear of the old house. Dr. Anna Kelton, the widow of Dwight H. Kelton, author of the *Annals of Fort Mackinac*, remembers her well, and her pleasant manners and exceedingly fair complexion even in old age. Dr. Bailey says, "Mrs. Edward Biddle was an Indian of queenly appear-

³¹Martha Tanner is the narrator of one of the legends recorded by Grace Franks Kane in "Myths and Legends of the Mackinacs," "The Manitous," "which she chanted for my pen," says Mrs. Kane. She is the subject of a fine tribute in the article by Judge Steere, in *Mich. Hist. Colls.*, XXII, 246.

ance; she dressed in Indian costume, the finest black and blue broad-cloth beautifully ornamented with silk and moosehair work."³²

She had seven children, several of whom died in infancy. Only three lived to maturity. Little Mary died at the very hour when Sarah was born. John, the son, lived to an honorable old age on the Island, holding the office of county clerk for over twenty years, and various other positions of honor. Sarah, the younger girl, married and lived to the age of ninety. Her husband was a lieutenant in the Civil War; her daughter has his commission, signed by the Governor of New York.

Besides her own children, Mrs. Edward Biddle brought up seven children that she from time to time took into her home in the hospitable and traditional Indian and French way,—one when it was a mere infant. Her given name was Agatha, and this name is commemorated by that of one of her descendants, spelled "Agathe", but pronounced "Agatha", with the accent on the second syllable as in the French name. In this young woman, it is easy to trace the heritage of Sophia's beauty, the tall, slender, lissome figure, the blue eyes, dark hair and wonderfully fair complexion. There is also glimpsed more than a suggestion of the individuality and charm that made her great-aunt the belle of an adoring circle.

Sophia is said to have had a mischievous sense of humor. A deeply enamoured swain called on her one evening at the island to bid her farewell before one of her visits to Detroit. She transported him to the seventh heaven by asking for a lock of his hair to take with her for remembrance. So bewitched was he by her beauty that he did not notice that during his call she from time to time would hold the lock over the candle, until by the time he left it was wholly consumed. Witchery indeed to have lulled both the sense of sight and of smell into oblivion by her fascinating smiles.

In spite of some diversions and the company of her family, it is evident that she was lonely on the Island. After the gay winters she had passed in Detroit, she may well have missed that circle of friends. A letter written to her by Mrs. John Biddle, expresses the latter's solicitude over a letter that Sophia had written to her. It is dated at Wyandotte, December 27, 1839.

³²Bailey, *Mackinac*, ed. 1897, p. 180.

..... "accuse your friends of neglecting you. Had I known her sister would be with your mother [this winter, we] would have asked you to come down. At the time you left us there was every prospect of your having more gaiety at Mackinac than I could promise you here, and I thought your parents might think it unreasonable to take you so often from them when your society was so important to them in the long winter evenings. Mamma is spending her winter in Philadelphia with Cousin Mary. While (James Claypoole) was in Philadelphia, he was passing W. [N?] Biddle's and was so sure he saw you at the window that he was on the point of going in. It must have been Meta, who is tall and has dark hair and eyes, and there may be some slight family resemblance. I thought much of your father when the Whigs were successful in Michigan. I wish since you sent a Democrat from Mackinac you had given us our staunch man . . . King. His vote for the Major would be important." She complains that the Major will not electioneer. "James was delighted to hear Sarah is going to school and could speak English. He wants to know how far she has got in spelling and whether she can beat him. I had the pleasure of knowing Melinda Scott very well in former times, and am glad for your sake she is spending the winter in Mackinac. W. Woodbridge, an aide of the General's is reported as carrying on a desperate flirtation with Eliza Kercheval."

It is a long letter, and every word breathes genuine affection for Sophia, and shows the intimate place that she held in the writer's family. Major John Biddle is extravagantly praised by all the historians of early Detroit as a "prince of gentlemen",—one chronicler says—scarce are there adjectives enough for them. This letter of his wife's shows that she was not inferior to him in mind and heart, and their evident affection for Sophia is a testimony of her worth, and evidence of the position she had attained in their social affairs.³³

The reference to Sarah's schooling is of interest, as it was perhaps her sister's school she attended. Sophia taught the children her mother had befriended, and the little sister may have been included in this class for awhile. Sophia was evidently not an idle

³³For social life in Detroit, 1830—, and the position of the Biddles, see Fuller, *Economic and Social Beginnings of Michigan*, 149-150.

girl. She was exceedingly deft with her needle. Several of her needle books are kept as treasures in the family. Mrs. Kane's reference³⁴ is evidently to Sophia rather than to the "youngest daughter," who was living long after the incident mentioned,—“and the little sewing basket with its gold thimble was found with the needle sticking in the lace she had been sewing.”

Mrs. Baird asserts that for a time Sophia turned against her mother and her mother's religion, but Martha Tanner said that she was always an affectionate and respectful daughter.

At that time on the island there was certainly much controversy over religion. In Mrs. Baird's *Reminiscences* and in Rezak's *History of the Diocese*, the Catholic sentiment is expressed; in Mrs. Eliza Chappell Porter's letters is shown something of the Protestant side. It is evident that proselyting knew no bounds. It must have been a bewildering thing for the poor Indians to know which side to take. It was a doubly hard situation for a young girl whose father's and mother's affiliations were different. During her stay in Detroit, Sophia had attended the Episcopalian services, and her brother was afterward educated in an Episcopalian school. What effect this creedal rivalry may have had on the mind of one who had suffered so great a blow to her faith in humanity as had this young and beautiful girl, can only be conjectured. It could not have added to her happiness; but the way in which her memory is cherished in the family of her younger sister, who had told so many tales of her to children and grandchildren, is assurance that Martha Tanner was right, and that she never wavered in her loyalty and devotion to her mother. Sarah's daughter was named for her, and the relics of the girlhood of the beautiful great-aunt are kept reverently in the family. After her death, Sophia's room was closed and so remained until the death of her mother.

There is a legend that some years after Sophia's death, Lieutenant Pemberton came to visit her grave, and that it was he who caused to be placed upon the then plain tombstone the chiselled rose that now ornaments it.

A rose for her, my island rose
That was so dear to me.
O how could I have given up
A flower so sweet as she?

³⁴*Mich. Hist. Mag.*, X, 341.

A rose for her, my island rose,
Though of hard stone it be,
No harder than the proud, cold heart,
That wrought its will in me.

A rose for her, my island rose,—
And tears for joys long lost,
And tears throughout the bitter years
That I must count the cost!

The incident of the lover's visit to the grave is mentioned in a book of Marion Harland's, entitled "With The Best Intentions," wherein the officer's identity is thinly veiled under the title of "General -----, of the Confederate service." This account somewhat palliates the conduct of the General. It credits him with having been a Southerner. He was a Philadelphian, but he married a Virginian girl in 1848, the year of Sophia's death. During the time between his marriage and his first visit to the island to which he came after hard fighting in the Seminole War, he had participated with brilliancy in the Mexican War, and had been advanced to the rank of Major, and presented with a sword by his native state, at Philadelphia. He died near Philadelphia in 1881.

In the days when lovely Sophia Biddle voyaged from Mackinac to Detroit to reign as one of the belles of that growing city, she had no such choice of routes as has the traveller of today. For many years there were no passenger ships on the lakes. The "Old Brigg Adams" carried mail, passengers and produce in 1802 and thereabouts (Burton Hist. Coll. Leaflet, II, 4) though it was a government boat; and probably the "sloop of seventy tons burden", used by Wilkinson for his voyage in 1797, was a fur-trader's cargo boat, built and sailed in mercantile ventures. The first *Michigan* had done duty as a war department boat and a carrier, and the second *Michigan* (so-called for more than sixty-five years, now the *Wolverine*) was similarly employed. There were so few boats of that size, it was necessary to make all sorts of uses of what there were. Later, the "palatial steamer" also named *Michigan*, was a much appreciated visitor. Elizabeth Whitney Williams tells of the joy on the islands at her first appearance in the spring, and gives a graphic account of one of her last trips in the late fall.³⁵

³⁵*Child of the Sea.*

Most of the early tourists to Mackinac suffered so with seasickness after they passed into Lake Huron, that there are few descriptions of the part of the voyage between Saginaw Bay and Mackinac. An account recently appeared in *Detroit Saturday Night*, from the diary of a woman passenger on the first trip of the *Superior* to Green Bay in 1831. She writes, the passing of Saginaw Bay was "the dread of all the timid of the party, as it is the only time we entirely lose sight of land." Sunday, August 7, they landed at Mackinac and attended church. "The authorities would not allow the Sabbath to be violated by taking wood on board, we were, therefore annoyed from twelve until two in the morning by the throwing and piling of wood." On the return trip to Mackinac, they landed on a week-day, Tuesday August twelfth. "Some of the party walked, after tea, to the Mission sustained by Bostonians. They have a school attended by one hundred and two scholars. The Catholics also have a school of twenty-five or thirty pupils."

Today in summer there are numerous ways to get to Detroit from Mackinac. But the "summer people" often ask, "how do they manage in winter?"

The *Algolah*, the steamer that meets the trains at Mackinaw City and takes passengers to the island, is taken off the route in the early fall. After that, visitors for the island must go on the State ferries, the *St. Ignace* and the *Mackinaw City*, or on the railroad ferry, the *Chief Wawatam*, to St. Ignace, and from there cross on the *Elva*, to Mackinac Island.

The *Elva* is the little boat that makes the "Snows" run in summer. Her commander on this run is usually the well known Captain Louis Goudreau, the only man who can take her through the "Snows" Channels when the water is so low as it has been for a long time. The boat does not stop at Goose Island, celebrated by Henry and Hubbard, although the Captain is the sole owner of this "lovely little spot" so enthusiastically described by Marryat; but goes far to the West of it, and makes for Hessel. In winter the "Snows" run is given up.

The *Elva* makes the Island from St. Ignace as long as the channel is open, with occasional visits to Cheboygan when the weather permits. One fall the *Perry*, that in summer plies between Cheboygan and the Island, made a thrilling rescue, battling through thickening



Sophia Biddle's grave

ice, to get a man on Bois Blanc Island who had been wounded in cutting trees.

Sometimes the *Elva* has to land at Chimney Rock, when it is too stormy to make the harbor of the island. Sometimes she can only put off mail, without transferring passengers or getting the return mail. Sometimes she goes to the north of the island and comes into the dock that way, when the straits are frozen, while the lake is still open. As the ice grows thicker, the *Chief Wawatam* sometimes turns aside to break a path for her through the pack.

After the ice is formed, dog-teams can go across long before it is safe for horses. An island item from the St. Ignace Republican-News of January 24, 1925, says, "The mail was taken to St. Ignace across the ice for the first time on Thursday, and the dog-team was on the job, merrily, with jingling sleighbells."

Later, horses and sleighs can be driven over. There is always the chance of breaking through, and then they choke the horses with a strap to make them float (just as the Indians used to do with their ponies) and salvage what they can of the load.

On January 8, 1927, a Mackinac Island item in the St. Ignace paper says, "The Arnold mailboat is still making the crossing, and we missed the mails only one day, when the *Elva* became fast in the car-ferry's channel, and had to stay there till the big boat came along and freed her."

January 15, the same year, "George Litchard brought over the mail from St. Ignace Wednesday and Thursday with a dog-team. Yesterday he made the trip with a horse". On January 29, the Island correspondent says, "The ice is at best a treacherous critter. The mail-carrier coming from St. Ignace Saturday morning made the crossing with a twenty-four hundred pound load in perfect safety; going back over the same track, his horse went through off Chimney Rock though fortunately the animal was extricated safely."

The same paper in March tells of the funeral at Mackinac Island of an old and respected citizen, James E. Quinlan, a prominent educator of the district. "The entire island turned out, but the ice condition interposed an effectual barrier that prevented the obsequies being a proposed demonstration from all of Mackinac County. It was impossible to get across to the island. A brother and two sisters came that morning and were put off the big car-ferry on

the ice whither a party from the island had cautiously made their way with a dog-sleigh and boat, to meet them; another sister could not make the perilous attempt. The younger brother of the deceased had come the day before, and he walked over, taking his life in his hands in making the journey. Captain Goudreau of the *Elva* did his best to get the boat ready to try the journey even if only into safe ice on the other side, but it could not be done".

A column in the Cheboygan Tribune in February, 1928, laments that "The uncertain condition of the ice between Bois Blanc and Mackinac Island is causing Bois Blanc islanders a great deal of anxiety and upsetting their business plans. The ice between the two places is so erratic that wood deliveries have been prevented, thus isolating Mackinac Island from a source of fuel and Bois Blanc from a source of cash and trade. The unsafe crossing has also endangered life. . . . Richardson says that he walked across to Mackinac Saturday and found the expanse perfectly safe. He was taking Warden John Bible across for medical treatment. But twenty minutes after landing, he says, he looked out and saw a black line, seemingly about eight feet wide, between the ice and the shore. The road on which he had crossed was moving out. . . . Bois Blanc islanders say that an average of one person a year loses his life in attempting to cross the treacherous water road. As yet, the same providence which has given Cheboygan a mild winter, has kept all trying the transit, so far as is known, from falling victims to the icy waters of the straits."

Saturday, March 3, 1928, "Davey Bunker crossed to St. Ignace on Tuesday [from Mackinac Island] with a dog team. He was the first person to make a start and on the following morning Captain Goudreau of the *Elva*, had his crew, Thompson and Lavake, bring the mail, walking across, and pushing a boat with runners on. On their return to St. Ignace, Mr. and Mrs. P. R. Bogan made the trip with them. The ice is reported to vary from three to eight inches thick.³⁶

The perils of the crossing before the big ice-crusher, the *Chief Wawatam*, was in service, was keenly felt. All winter long the only way to get from the Upper to the Lower Peninsula, unless round by Canada or Chicago, was walking or driving across the ice.

³⁶St. Ignace, *Rep. News*, Mackinac Island Correspondent.

In 1876, an item in the Cheboygan Free Press, reads, "The Mackinac mail has not been received for two weeks. There is no way of communicating with our island friends at present, but we presume they are all there." A week later the mail arrived. "The carrier reports the crossing very difficult and dangerous. He left Mackinac on Thursday and was obliged to camp on Bois Blanc until Sunday before he could find an opening to cross."

January 20, 1880, the Cheboygan Democrat says, "The crossing of the Straits should be properly brushed between Pointe La Barbe and the lighthouse [McGulpin's]. For a mile and a half there is (sic) no bushes and accidents are likely to occur if it is not attended to at once. Strangers should not attempt to cross without a guide." Mrs. Kane refers to this "brushing" to mark the path in her account of her wedding journey,³⁷ "Green boughs marked the trail."³⁸

There was even then talk of a better way. D. Farrand Henry, "who spent the winter at St. Ignace, studied the problem of crossing the Straits during winter, he says that a powerful ferry would have no difficulty".³⁹ But there were those who criticised this plan; one man says, Feb. 9, "the *Algomah* could cross but could not land; the ice is piled too high on the shore,—any ferry would have that trouble."

In spite of argument, the gap was finally bridged, first by one boat, then another⁴⁰ until in the *Chief Wawatam* was reached the most satisfactory solution of the vexatious problem of uniting the Upper to the Lower Peninsula all the year round.

The Ferry.

Oh, the little ferries, they run in summer,
And they're right good ferries, too;
But the Chief Wawatam runs all winter,
Goes right on through.

Through slush and ice with the wind a-howling,
And a blinding snow-storm, too;
The good Wawatam, the Chief Wawatam,
Goes right on through.

Sometimes surrounded by stubborn ice-packs,
Held fast for a day or two,
By steadily working, the old Wawatam,
Goes right on through.

³⁷*Mich. Hist. Mag.*, X, 332.

³⁸Between Mackinac Island and Cheboygan.

³⁹*Cheboygan Democrat*, April 7, 1881.

⁴⁰*Mich. Hist. Mag.*, IX, 363.

Comes word of need on Mackinac Island,
There are sick folks over there, too,
So a path is cut for the little Elva,
To go right on through.

A state divided by deep, dark waters,
Treacherous currents, too,
Yet the old Wawatam, the Chief Wawatam,
Ploughs right on through.

A bridge in summer and a bridge in winter,
In fall and springtime, too;
The railroad ferry, big Chief Wawatam,
Goes right on through.

February 23, 1928.

